



Brochure  
Dragon Professional Anywhere

# Accessibility in the workplace

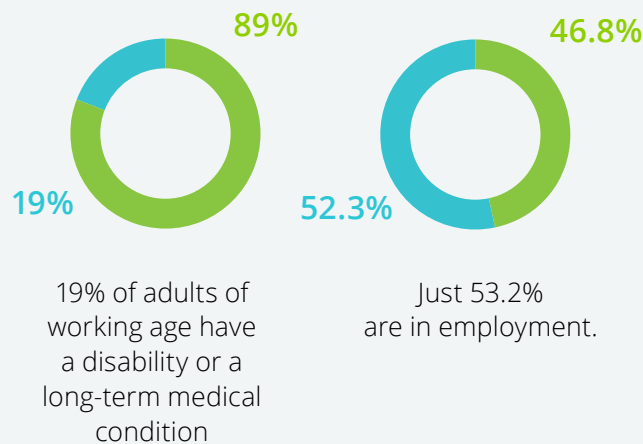
How Dragon Professional Anywhere helps  
people with disabilities to start and to stay in  
work

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## The employment landscape



According to Government figures published in August 2020, 7.7 million people in the UK of working age (16-64) reported that they were disabled.

An estimated 4.1 million were in employment, an increase of 97,000 from 2019. But this is a broad brush figure: some will be part-timers and others in insecure or temporary employment.

In fact, disabled people have an employment rate that is 28.1 percentage points lower than that of people who are not disabled. This difference is often referred to as the disability employment gap. The good news is that between 2013 and 2020, the disability employment gap reduced by 5.0 percentage points.

The government wants to narrow the gap still further. In 2017 they pledged to get one million more people with disabilities into employment over ten years. Technology will play a key part in their plans. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BRIEFING PAPER. Number 7540 People with disabilities in employment by Andrew Powell House of Commons library 13 August 2020

# The Equality Act has given people more rights and raised awareness

## Why are more people with disabilities in work now?

First there was The Equality Act of 2010. This outlaws direct and indirect disability discrimination. Employers now have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to support disabled job applicants and employees. The definition of disability is contained in section 6 of the act: 'a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal day-to-day activities.' This includes conditions such as migraine, cancer, HIV and dyslexia.

Secondly, employers and HR professionals are now much better informed. The Equality Act has given people more rights and raised awareness. It applies to all public bodies and the focus is on promoting equality rather than just reducing inequalities. As of July 2020, 18,219 employers had signed up to the Disability Confident scheme.

The third factor is developments in technology. Everyday technology such as mobile phones are more sophisticated, reliable and affordable. Accessibility is now mainstream, instead of an expensive extra for a select few

### Speech recognition – a valuable tool for employees

In the past, people with physical disabilities, dyspraxia or who had repetitive strain injury would struggle to use a computer. Many had to give up their jobs. but speech recognition lets them navigate without using a keyboard and mouse. Now they can do the same work but in a different way.

Talking is a more intuitive way of working. We can just speak our thoughts aloud and see them appear on the page. But it isn't just about dictating single sentences and seeing them in print, magic though that is.

People with dyslexia find they move from working at word and sentence level where they are thinking about spelling, vocabulary and syntax to composing more fluently, with an emphasis on content, structure and the quality of the arguments. The draft is more sophisticated, higher quality writing.

Dragon Professional Anywhere reduces anxiety. Many people struggle with 'blank page syndrome' and spend too long searching for the perfect first sentence. Now they can plunge in and create a quick first draft and this gives them a sense of achievement.

Speech recognition is especially beneficial for people who have memory retention issues or who are undergoing chemotherapy treatment and find they have 'brain fog'. Instead of planning a sentence only to have it disappear as they are writing the first word, they can compose effortlessly: Think, Speak, Read and Check.



Dave was a university lecturer who developed multiple sclerosis. He experienced limb weakness and visual disturbance. He didn't think he would adapt to speech recognition after years of two fingered typing but his text output increased from a shaky and often inaccurate 40wpm to over 80 wpm once he got going with Dragon Professional Anywhere.

## Dragon lets people with disabilities enjoy more fulfilling work

The voluntary sector organisation Leonard Cheshire believes that one of the major barriers to employing people with disabilities is: 'an enduring expectation among employers and colleagues that they will not be able to do their job as well as a non-disabled person. This stigma is a major barrier to the aspirations, skills and talent of disabled people being fully realised.' Technology can remove the barriers.

Many people with dyslexia struggle with reading, writing and spelling but now software such as Dragon Professional Anywhere can help them overcome these obstacles and give full rein to creativity and problem-solving skills.

Julie Logan, Emeritus Professor of Entrepreneurship at Cass Business School in London, says that 20% of the UK's entrepreneurs are dyslexic. Most people know about Lord Sugar, Richard Branson and Jamie Oliver but Ingvar Kamrad who founded Ikea is another inspirational example.



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"... dyslexia created a breakdown of communication and connection between my brain, eyes and hands. Dragon, a speech recognition program, has been an amazing discovery for me as I do not have a problem with my communication and I can now type 'accurately' as fast as can I talk. Absolutely brilliant!"<sup>2</sup>

— John Clucas, Sales Consultant at UK Staycations Ltd.

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<sup>2</sup> Logan J (2009) Dyslexic entrepreneurs: the incidence; their coping strategies and their business skills. *Dyslexia* 15(4):328-346.

### Breaking down barriers

[Access to Work](#) is an employment programme that can provide funding, support, equipment, software, training and 'reasonable adjustments' to the workplace.

Josh was born with no right hand. He found it difficult to complete his work: 'You can't work to the best of your ability...some of the emails maybe won't be as long as you want them to be because you're just reliant on one-handed typing. If I had to input figures into a spreadsheet, I'd have to ask a colleague to do it and wait for them to come back to me maybe half a day later.'

Access to Work funded his equipment and Dragon software, his employer said: 'It's excellent. Dragon has made Josh as proficient as anyone else. It's been excellent. Without this, he would not have been able to keep up with his work and this would have had an impact on his workload, his levels of stress, as well as on his colleagues. Taken from Access to Work: Qualitative research with applicants, employers and delivery staff DWP 2018. <sup>3</sup>

Dragon Professional Anywhere lets employees work up to three times faster. This can transform the working lives of many disabled people, not just making them more productive, but also relieving anxiety and stress and letting them showcase their strengths.

Jobs of the future are likely to require employees to step into roles where creativity, problem solving, attention to detail and innovation are in demand. Many people with disabilities and neurodiverse conditions have those skills already. Now we have the technology that can remove the barriers and let them shine.

<sup>3</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/756414/access-to-work-qualitative-research-with-applicants-employers-and-delivery-staff.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756414/access-to-work-qualitative-research-with-applicants-employers-and-delivery-staff.pdf)





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