



lightyear  
foundation

## Etiquette

Two thirds of British people say they feel awkward around disabled people.

Disabled people may be offended by some details of behaviour and language as they often reinforce discrimination and inaccurate assumptions. It helps to think about your actions and language and remember that it is ok to ask what people's need are as they are the experts.

### Do's

- Shake a person's hand
- Make eye contact
- Offer assistance, wait until it is accepted and provide the help that is asked for – don't be offended by a refusal
- Treat people as individuals
- Treat adults as adults
- Talk to the disabled person not their dog or assistant
- Try to get to a wheelchair user's eye level
- Ask how a person wants to communicate
- Be patient with people with speech impairments, ask them to repeat if needed and say what you have understood
- Introduce yourself and others who are there, say where people are if visually impaired
- Use the correct language and terminology, if in doubt ask a disabled person how they prefer to be described
- Speak to the disabled person before their personal assistant/support worker
- Look at a disabled person when they are talking to you
- Treat support workers, personal assistants and dogs with courtesy and respect

### Don'ts

- Lean on wheelchairs
- Make assumptions, people can have hidden impairments
- Ask inappropriate personal or medical questions
- Shout at people who have hearing impairments
- Don't correct or finish the sentences of people with a speech impairment
- Grab a person to guide them
- Ask personal assistants or support workers questions about the disabled person they work for
- Pet working dogs

### Useful resources:

<https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/end-the-awkward/>

<https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-drc/etiquette>