

HOW TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES LIVING WITH IBS

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a common health condition but little is known about it, and symptoms can impact people's everyday lives. **Improving understandings of the condition could help people with IBS have better and healthier working lives.**

THE RESEARCH



Research from The University of Sheffield **explored what it means to live with the common condition**, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).



25 people who identified as living with IBS took part in the research by **completing a daily diary and a follow up qualitative interview.**

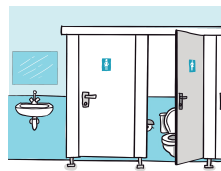


They were asked how the condition affected the places **people could or couldn't go, the routines of their day, and interactions and relationships.**

FINDINGS



Challenges in discussing IBS at work



Issues of comfort and convenience of **accessible toilet provision** at work



Role of **commuting and travel** is significant in navigating **symptoms**



Importance of having enough time or the **flexibility of time to accommodate symptoms**



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There's a pressure of trying to go to the toilet before work means that I don't go but then **the anxiety means that I then need to go as soon as I get to work** but because I haven't factored in extra time at that point and then I am ending up rushing into the office. It's not something I really talk about, so I tend to say that I was stuck in traffic which I haven't been. **I could talk about it, but I choose not to, I suppose.**

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RECOMMENDATIONS



Allow for **flexible working hours** to give people with IBS autonomy over their time



Provide **working from home as an option**, whilst taking care not to socially exclude



Improve awareness, attitudes and **support** for hidden health conditions in the workplace



Give **mobile workers and commuters time to stop** and take breaks, with toilet facilities



Facilitate **comfortable and accessible toilet provision** at work

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