

Work And Youth Strategy



The special situation of young patients with chronic conditions

Finding employment can be challenging for any young person, even more so if they live with a chronic condition which affects their everyday life, educational opportunities and ability to find and keep a job. The European Patients' Forum Youth Group's Work And Youth Strategy (WAYS) project aims to provide useful insights into the experience of young patients' in the field of employment.



Survey methodology

An online survey was launched in December 2018 and shared broadly on EPF and EPF Youth Group platforms to gather employment-related real-life experience from young patients.

62 full answers

were submitted by young patients from

21 countries across Europe

27%
male



73%
female

What did the WAYS survey look at?



Experiences of young people with chronic conditions in finding and keeping employment



The role of institutions and support groups to guide young people into employment



Perspectives of disclosing a chronic condition to a potential employer



Examples of specific difficulties and good practice

Survey results

44%

of those surveyed felt that finding a job was 'Difficult' or 'Very Difficult'

35%

of respondents said that they would not want to disclose an 'invisible' condition under any circumstances

21%

of young people identified prejudice against their chronic condition as a barrier to finding employment

81%

of respondents were not aware of employment support registries available in their country of residence

Only **5%**

of young people identified their wider community (outside of family and friends), as supporting them in finding employment



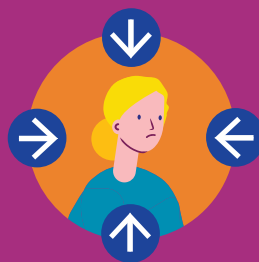
Young patients reported a general perception from employers that they won't be as effective as other employees with a comparable level of education and experience, without a chronic condition.



Key findings



Young people living with a chronic condition can be in an especially difficult situation in the beginning of their careers because their long-term illness might have affected their ability to benefit fully from regular education (long hospital stays, general issues with health preventing them), besides their lack of working experience.



Many of the respondents have already experienced negative attitude towards them at the job market and their previous workplaces, such as: doubts in the specific needs that the condition requires, lack of trust in the patients' professional abilities, and psychological pressure to the patient to make up for the time he/she was away (for example, on a sick leave).



A significant amount of young patients would not disclose their condition before a job interview, in the fear of negative discrimination. There is however a notable difference in patients having a visible condition with less of a choice of disclosure.



Our recommendations

1.

We encourage training for managers and employers to engage in better dialogue with young employees living with chronic conditions. They should seek to understand their individual condition and circumstances, and to identify and implement together the support and adjustment they need. This should be led at all times by the experiences and expertise of the young person and not the expectations of the employer.

Home working



2.

We call for flexible working policies such as adjusted work hours, and opportunity to manage workload around appointments, to be applied to young employees with complex medical needs just as they should be applied for other circumstances, for example, childcare arrangements.

3.

If feasible by profession, there should be greater opportunities for home and remote working made available to young people living with a chronic condition, so that they can make a valuable contribution to the employment market without the rigorous demands of travelling to work and working within environments not adjusted to their needs.



Thank you to all survey participants and partners!

For more information about Work and Youth Strategy: Survey Report 2020, visit our [webpage](#) or [email](#) us.

