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Our aim is to get you the best terms and conditions of service and provide the advice and support on any matter you may need related to your job.

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Legal Services

We work with a panel of specialist personal injury law firms to provide free legal assistance to any Unite member who wants to bring a personal injury claim for damages for any accident (outside of their own home) in the UK or Republic of Ireland.

We provide free legal advice and representation to members who have employment related problems.

The 24 hour legal helpline service

As a Unite member, you and your family members can obtain free initial advice on any non work related legal matter by telephoning our 24 hour helpline on 0870 240 45 45.



British Association
of Dermatologists



The Psoriasis Association



Unite the Union

Making a difference – together

Helping you to gain the best
representation and fairness at work

Psoriasis in the workplace



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- **Equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies**
- **More holidays**
- **Information and consultation**

Psoriasis is a skin disease affecting one in every 50 people. As well as managing the symptoms, people with psoriasis also have to cope with the disease's impact on their employment

Psoriasis requires treatment on a daily basis and for some this may mean taking time off work for hospital appointments which are not always available before or after working hours.

People with psoriasis may face staring and unwelcome comments. They may have to deal with colleagues who do not understand the disease and perhaps wrongly think that the condition is contagious or due to poor hygiene, or resent them taking time off work. Some people may face direct discrimination.

Coping with psoriasis in the workplace may sometimes be difficult, but with honesty and understanding on all sides it can be managed.

About psoriasis

Psoriasis is a long term, chronic skin condition characterised by grey or silvery flaky patches on the skin, called plaques, which are red and inflamed underneath. Commonly affected areas include the scalp, elbows, knees, navel, palms, ears and groin

Some people are more likely to develop psoriasis than others, particularly if there is someone else in their family who has psoriasis. However the trigger for psoriasis can be an outside event such as a throat infection, stress or an injury to the skin.

It can appear for the first time at any age.

About one in ten people with psoriasis also suffer from psoriatic arthritis – stiff, painful joints. It can be very painful and cause deformity and disability. The disease can affect any joint in the body but problems with fingers, hands, wrists and feet are common.

There is no cure for psoriasis but medical treatment can be used to ease the symptoms. The three main types of treatment for psoriasis include the use of topical medications (creams and ointments applied directly to the skin), oral medications (such as tablets) and light therapy, which takes place in hospital. A new range of biologic drugs (via injection or IV only) is available for those with the most severe forms of the disease.

The impact of psoriasis

Living with psoriasis not only involves tedious treatment regimes but it can have a profound social and psychological effect.

People may avoid social situations and psoriasis may hold them back from forming relationships. They may be wary about meeting new people and deeply embarrassed by their appearance or the itchiness of the psoriatic scales.

Feelings of low self-esteem and anxiety may appear amongst people living with this condition. These feelings can then trigger depression, especially if the psoriasis worsens.

Managing psoriasis in the workplace

- Educate co-workers and employers about psoriasis and its symptoms, the effects it may have on working capacity and time off needed. This can help change people's perceptions and expectations of people with psoriasis. This could be achieved with

the support of Occupational Health departments.

- Find ways to resolve problems connected to working with psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis that will benefit both the worker and the company – e.g. extra sets of uniforms or personal protective equipment (PPE) may be needed.
- Facilities and time for applying topical treatments and emollients (moisturisers), it is important to keep the skin generally healthy particularly in occupations where dermatitis can be a problem.
- Offer suggestions for possible changes, such as using assistive devices that may help sufferers do their job more easily. These may include supportive chairs or computer keyboards for those with psoriatic arthritis.
- Make sure management understand the need for time off to attend treatment which is crucial to keep flare ups to a minimum, (some clinics may only operate between the hours of 9am and 5pm). A flexible and understanding management is very important.
- If you have psoriasis aim to be honest and open about it and your needs.

About World Psoriasis Day

The 29th October is a day dedicated to people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. The purpose of World Psoriasis Day is to raise awareness of the disease among patients, medical professionals and the general public, and to give people with psoriatic diseases the attention and consideration they deserve.

World Psoriasis Day is sponsored by the International Federation of Psoriasis Associations (IFPA).

For more information
www.psoriasisday.com

More information about psoriasis can be found at:

British Association of Dermatologists www.bad.org.uk
The Psoriasis Association www.psoriasis-association.org.uk

