

# The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower





## The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower originated in 2016 when London Gatwick Airport posed the question, '**How can we recognise that one of our passengers may have a non obvious disability?**'. The answer was to create a lanyard with a simple sunflower design on a green background. It was intended to be a discreet sign enabling airport staff to recognise that the wearer (or someone with them) may require some extra help, time or assistance when moving through the airport.

The success of this simple but effective design and idea and the positive response it received, has meant that the Sunflower Lanyard Scheme® has now been adopted in the UK by all of the major airports, a number of supermarkets, railway networks, coach, bus and tram companies, police forces, NHS trusts, leisure facilities and an increasing number of small and large businesses and organisations. Essentially, it can be used anywhere where people meet.

It is becoming more widely recognised throughout the world and has also been launched by businesses in Europe (Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Spain and Sweden) in the Middle-East (Dubai), in Australia, the Caribbean (Curacao), Canada and the US. We have a [location map](#) on our website where you can see where the sunflower is recognised.

Over the next few pages, you can find a more detailed overview of the Sunflower Lanyard Scheme®, our products, brand and history. Please do get in touch if you need any further information at [join@hiddendisabilitiesstore.com](mailto:join@hiddendisabilitiesstore.com).

In the UK, 1 in 5 people have a disability



**80%** of these people have a hidden disability

# Not every disability is visible – some are hidden

## What is a hidden disability?

Hidden disabilities don't have physical signs and include learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. They can also include asthma, COPD, and other lung conditions as well as chronic illnesses such as renal failure, diabetes, and sleep disorders when those diseases significantly impact day-to-day life.



Living with these conditions can make daily life more demanding for many people. They affect each person in different ways and can be painful, exhausting, and isolating. Without visible evidence of the hidden disability, it is frequently difficult for others to recognise or acknowledge the challenges faced and as a consequence, sympathy and understanding can often be in short supply.

## Why did we choose a sunflower?

We wanted a discreet sign which was still clearly visible from a distance as well as being distinctive, joyful, and dynamic. We chose a sunflower as it suggests happiness, positivity, strength as well as growth and confidence. It is a universally recognised flower as well as being gender-neutral. It intends to allow everyone with Hidden Disabilities to choose to be visible when they need to be.



## Be visible when you want to be

Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people including staff, colleagues and health professionals that the person wearing it (or someone with them) has a hidden disability and may need additional support, help or more time.

### How can wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower benefit the wearer?

- People may ask the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower wearer what they can do to assist them
- The wearer can use their Hidden Disabilities Sunflower to explain what additional help may be needed

### Do you need to qualify to wear one?

There is no qualifying list of hidden disabilities. If you have a hidden disability and feel that you would benefit from wearing a Hidden Disabilities Sunflower product, please do. The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower does not entitle you to anything other than recognising that you have a hidden disability and that you may need some assistance, help, or a little more time. It is NOT a pass to be fast-tracked nor for any other benefit.

### Where can you get one?

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyards are available free of charge to customers from the many businesses and organisations who have joined the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme®. However some people may be unable to travel to collect a free lanyard, would like a different product or would prefer to have it delivered, so they are available to purchase from [hiddendisabilitiesstore.com](http://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com).

### Where is it recognised?

As awareness increases, Hidden Disabilities Sunflower wearers now benefit more widely from help being offered to make their daily living a little easier. You can explore where it is currently recognised using our online location map on our website ([hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/find-the-sunflower](http://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/find-the-sunflower)).



# Global recognition

To date, we have provided over two million lanyards both to businesses as well as directly to the general public.

## Selection of Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme® members



Although initially the majority have been UK-based, a number of international companies and organisations are contacting us to join our scheme as awareness of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower grows. With this increased awareness, Sunflower Lanyard wearers benefit more widely from help being offered around the world to make their daily living a little easier.

## The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Training

When you join the Sunflower Lanyard Scheme®, we can advise your business and staff on how to get a deeper understanding of hidden disabilities and learn how to approach and support customers wearing the Hidden Disabilities sunflower.

We offer implementation and training recommendations when you join the scheme and, when you purchase a starter pack or spend over £500, you will gain access to our online training videos:

- What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower
- What is a hidden disability?
- What should you do when you see the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?

We constantly strive to improve our service and the advice we offer and visit a number of our clients training days to enable our staff to gain experience and a deeper understanding of the requirements from different sectors.



Creator of



For businesses who require a more in-depth and bespoke training than provided on our Hidden Disabilities Sunflower training videos, we have partnered with Purple, one of the UK's leading providers of disability-related training and consultancy services, to support clients working with disabled people. Purple have worked with organisations to provide virtual training solutions including webinars, online workshops, one to one coaching and e-tutorials.

# COVID19

During the pandemic and as the lockdown eases, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower has been supporting wearers with a number of specific ID cards that deliberately explain the type of help the wearer needs.

This was driven by the government guidelines during the pandemic and the specific needs that people with hidden disabilities require. As a result of the social distancing rules, we decided to introduce cards to attach onto the lanyard which highlight the hidden disability and explain what appropriate help, assistance or understanding can be provided. For instance, it can be difficult for people with visual impairments to estimate distance so this card clearly explain this.



We have also recently launched face covering cards which are being recognised by the majority UK railway networks as well as coach, bus tram companies in the UK.



We have launched Sunflower Nanoweave snoods with antibacterial spray as well as face shields and will soon provide facemasks in the next couple of weeks.



## Our history

### May 2016

**The Sunflower Lanyard Scheme® launches at London Gatwick Airport**  
The lanyard is designed to identify passengers with a hidden disability who may need additional help while travelling

### 2018

**UK rail providers** become members of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme®

**The Co-operative Channel Islands** is the first UK supermarket chain to pilot the Sunflower Lanyard

**Working with international airports** including sharing training materials and advising on best practice

### 2019

**Tabbers Limited** trademarks the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme®

**Cinemas and visitor attractions**

**Businesses and organisations launch across the UK**  
Banks, hospitals, insurance companies, shopping centres, sports venues and arenas

**The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower online store** opens up to the general public

**Global airports launch the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower**  
Sydney, Brisbane in Australia, Seattle and San Jose in the US, Copenhagen, Trieste, Istanbul and Amsterdam in Europe

**Two million Sunflower Lanyards** are distributed and The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard is globally recognised

**The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower training videos** are released for businesses

**Chelsea FC launch**

### 2016-2018

**The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard** rolls out across all major UK airports

**Major UK supermarkets trials NHS trusts and independent GP surgeries**  
Trial and launch the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

**All UK airports and railway stations**

**M&S** rolls out the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard in all their UK stores

**The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower charitable trust**  
10% of the revenue of each Item Is donated to the charity to support Hidden Disabilities groups

**Facebook Page**  
25,000 likes within a few days. Individuals and businesses from all over the world become aware and request the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard

**Sainsbury's and Argos** launch throughout the UK

**Tesco** launch in all of their UK and Irish stores

### 2020

**Nationwide trials the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower** becoming the first financial institution to join the scheme



To find put more, please get in touch with us at [join@hiddendisabilitiesstore.com](mailto:join@hiddendisabilitiesstore.com)  
[hiddendisabilitiesstore.com](http://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com)