



Employing People with Learning Disabilities A Guide to Recruitment and Selection



celebrating diversity in the workplace



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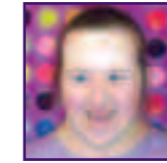


This guide has been compiled by SAY It's Workable - a team of eight adults with learning disabilities who design and lead their own employment campaign. SAY It's Workable is a unique initiative established as a result of recommendations in 'The Same As You?' (SAY) National Review of services for people with learning disabilities. SAY It's Workable is funded by the Change Fund through the SAY Project and is supported by Fife EmployAbility Team. Unless otherwise stated, anyone quoted within this brochure is employed by SAY It's Workable.

The SAY It's Workable Team



Alison Lonie - You need to give people a chance to prove themselves. Don't let a person's disability be important. See my skills and abilities.



Audrey Frame - My disability is just part of my life. It shouldn't stop me getting a job. I'm a hard-working employee. Getting a job is what life's about.



Susan Mitchell - It's important that people with learning disabilities have paid work like everyone else. It gives me independence and the chance to be part of a workforce.



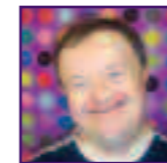
Willie Taylor - Having paid work has made a big difference to my life. I've learnt a lot of new things and made new friends. You should see the person first and get to know me better.



Louise Pollock - It's important for people with learning disabilities to have jobs. It gives us experience and a chance to show you we're reliable and capable employees.



Jacqueline Blair - We need employers to change their attitudes to people with learning disabilities. We're more alike than different. We make good workmates and we have hidden talents.



Kenny Richards - Don't worry about employing someone with a disability. We can do well in our jobs. There's a lot of support available. More companies employing people with disabilities is a big step in the right direction.



Sarah Muller - Working is enjoyable and it makes you feel good. It gives me confidence and a boost to my self-esteem. It gives me responsibility.

Celebrating diversity in the workplace

Diversity in the workplace is increasingly recognised as a key factor in improving efficiency, productivity and overall business success. Companies who celebrate diversity are those who are committed to enabling all people of working age, equal access as employees. They embrace difference in terms of gender, culture, religion, ethnicity and ability. Tomorrow's successful companies will be those who create conditions which allow all their employees to channel their skills, experience and abilities.



Veronica Gorman and colleagues, The Goth



Change your expectations

There are currently 8.7 million disabled adults in the UK - making up a large portion of potential employees and customers.

Companies who employ people from this growing sector of the market consistently find that:

- Disabled people are as productive and reliable as other employees.
- They tend to have better attendance records, stay with the company longer and have fewer accidents at work.
- Staff morale, team development and public opinion are enhanced when companies are seen as good employers of people with disabilities.

This guide will help you to implement procedures that comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 in relation to employment. Adhering to the DDA is not only required by law but shows that you are an employer committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce. Although the good practice highlighted in this guide is for the employment of people with learning disabilities, the same principles can be applied to any potential employee, regardless of their disability.

Supporting you to support diversity

Reference: DSS In-House Report 30 July 1997
Office for National Statistics based on the mid 1997 population estimates



Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes discrimination against disabled people unlawful in respect of employment, education, and access to goods, services and facilities.

You must ensure that employees who are (or become) disabled and potential employees who are disabled, are not significantly disadvantaged as a result of their disability.

“It is unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons in connection with employment, in particular recruitment and selection, training and retention.”

Reasonable adjustments

Implementing the DDA may require you to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate a disabled person.

A reasonable adjustment is that which attempts to reduce factors within employment which can disadvantage a disabled person. Reasonable adjustments promote equality and fairness as well as an inclusive work culture.

As most ‘reasonable adjustments’ are either no or low cost, adhering to the DDA is not only inherently right, but makes good business sense. The cost of defending a case of discrimination will far outweigh any costs associated with reasonable adjustments.

You are unlikely to incur any additional costs by employing a disabled person. Most disabled people are the best judge of their own capabilities. Ask them what adjustments they would need to do the job. It is important not to make assumptions about what someone can or cannot do. You want to recruit and retain the best person for the job. Disability needn't mean less able.

Examples of reasonable adjustments for people with a learning disability

- allowing them longer to learn something new
- providing a support person within the workplace
- supporting them to understand and adapt to change
- providing information in plain English with accompanying symbols and pictures

Non-compliance with DDA

When an employee or prospective employee feels that they have been treated less favourably on account of their disability, they can make a complaint of unlawful discrimination to an employment tribunal within three months of the date of the action complained of. Employment tribunals have powers to:

- make unlimited awards of compensation
- make a declaration regarding the rights of the complainant and the respondent in relation to the complaint
- make a recommendation to the employer to take reasonable steps to correct the adverse effect.

The consequences of a complaint against an employer can include:

- High financial cost of defending a case at tribunal or in the courts, and of paying out compensation
- The time taken to resolve complaints
- Personal liability discrimination action could be taken against an individual employer as well as the business. Employees equally may be liable under the law
- Loss of trust, reputation and community support. People will be less inclined to give their business to companies which are seen to discriminate against disabled people
- The personal cost to all individuals involved, in terms of time, anguish and stress

You can see from the list of consequences of a complaint, that you, as an employer are liable for the actions of your employees. For the purposes of the Act, any discriminatory

action taken by an employee in the course of their employment will be treated as if it was the employer who had taken the action. Including disability awareness training as part of a staff development programme would ensure that staff are aware of the impact of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and reduce the likelihood of unlawful discrimination.

Discrimination, Prejudice and Misconceptions

Research suggests that people with learning disabilities have the same aspirations for employment as every one else.

However, we only need to look at the high unemployment rates amongst people with learning disabilities to realise that many employers regard people with learning disabilities as not having good employee potential.

In reality, and given the opportunity, many people with learning disabilities have the same employment potential as everyone else. Some, but by no means all, may need adjustments including training and support.

Another common misconception is that disabled people are a Health and Safety risk. Research shows that disabled people tend to have better attendance records, stay with companies longer, and have no more accidents than non-disabled colleagues.

People with disabilities want to live their lives along with the rest of society. They certainly don't see themselves as requiring pity or sympathy and they certainly don't want to be singled out as being different.

Raising awareness and providing information about the Disability Discrimination Act is not enough to tackle the prejudice, misconceptions and discrimination faced by disabled people who wish to work. Face to face, direct contact is the only way to break

down existing barriers and create an inclusive society.

Reference: 'The Same As You' National Review of Services for People with Learning Disabilities 2000



Pat Glennie, The Pancake Place

Change your expectations

"We have to try harder to impress. I know that I can do it and I have to make sure that the interviewer has every confidence in me. I can impress them with what I can do. It can be difficult to impress people if I get too nervous".

Kenny

"I feel people should give us the chance, to prove that we can do that job. Don't think to yourself "She can't do this job" until you know me. Making assumptions is a bad thing. I know the most about my disabilities, just ask me".

Alison

"You have to ask me things and find out about me, to know what I can and can't do. You can't tell what I can do by looking at me".

Louise

"We're people the same as everyone else. We may have some difficulties but not a lot. Don't worry about it. I don't expect you to feel sorry for me. It's not good enough. It's like you're talking down to me. Sometimes people think we're not as good as them. How I do my job is more important than my disability".

Jacqui

Benefits to Employers

Developing a diverse workforce

When you are able to support people with disabilities in the workplace, you will be able to bring out the best in all your employees. Policies adopted to promote diversity will also enable you to minimise the costs associated with early retirement through ill health, stress and sickness absenteeism.

Good business practice

The spending power of people with disabilities in the UK, is estimated to be £45 - 50 billion. By 2004 40% of the UK population will be over 45, the age at which incidence of disability begins to significantly increase. Therefore, there is a large and growing sector of employees, existing and potential customers and stakeholders who will be disability aware.

Enhanced corporate image

Companies who are seen to employ people with disabilities are considered to be committed to equal opportunities and fairness. Staff morale and team development improves. Public opinion is positive towards companies which fit into this category.

Reliable employees

You will consistently find that disabled people are as productive and reliable as non-disabled employees, tend to have better attendance records, stay with your company longer and have fewer accidents at work. This can have a positive effect on recruitment costs.

Access to an untapped pool of labour

Many people with learning disabilities have the skills and abilities to succeed within employment, but are not being provided with opportunities. You have the capacity to source this labour market.



Pamela Williamson, McDonald's

Benefits to People with Learning Disabilities

Benefits of employment

Working enables people to achieve so much more than just financial reward. For people with learning disabilities, as for us all, there are other work related benefits.

Equality and a place in society

Everyone should be encouraged, and have the right to contribute to society by working. Work is about being an equal member of the community and gives us personal value and worth.

Money and independence

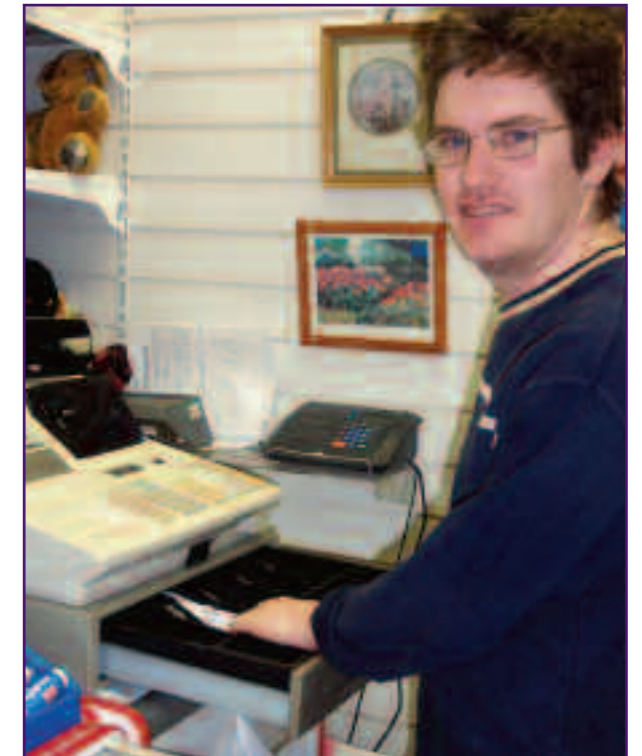
Employment provides people with a sense of achievement. Earning money gives people financial independence which enhances choice and consumer power.

Confidence and self esteem

Working has a positive impact on other people's perception of us. It enables people to be valued and respected for skills, abilities and achievements. The confidence gained from doing a job well has a positive effect on all aspects of life.

Social contact

Having a job expands life experience. Work is where people meet, make friends, form relationships and socialise.



Dean Hogarth, British Heart Foundation

Having a job would give me:

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Shirley Brown
Seasons Coffee Shop, Kincardine

"I've worked here for two years - every Monday from 9 til 3. It's good. I enjoy it - polishing, hoovering and cleaning tables. I have good workmates - they're nice and friendly. I look forward to my job. I feel much more confident. I save my wages up and buy things I want. It's made a difference to me."

"Shirley does her job very well. The customers enjoy her - she's a breath of fresh air. It's not the same if Shirley's not in - she's very important to the shop. Shirley working here has definitely changed my expectations of people with learning disabilities. Other employers should give it a try. It's a rewarding experience and it's been good for our business."

Lesley-Ann Mitch - owner



Brian Haggart
Keavil House Hotel, Crossford

"I tidy up the gardens around the hotel. I help the head gardener. I cut the grass, pull the weeds out and tidy the trees. It's good exercise! I like working outside. The staff are nice to talk to. I'm happier getting paid for my work. Getting paid is the best thing about having a job!"

"Brian fits in really well and progressed very quickly. His disability didn't concern us - it hasn't affected his job. When I have an applicant for a job, I look at them from a skill level - I don't see why we should rule someone out because they have a disability. We try to be inclusive. You have to look at everyone individually. Employers should be more open-minded."

Volker Steinemann - General Manager

Recruitment and Selection Procedures

Introduction

It would be fair to say that certain jobs are more suitable for some people than others - also that people with learning disabilities would not suitably fill some jobs. However, where the job has the potential to be undertaken by a person with a learning disability, you should give due consideration to the recruitment process. This may include job description, person specification, advertising, applications, interviews, training and induction.

Job Descriptions

A job description identifies the aims of the job and the duties which would need to be undertaken to fulfil these aims.

In developing a job description you should focus on what the job sets out to accomplish, not necessarily how this will be achieved.

For example the job may require that employees undertake written tests to assess competence levels as part of a staff development plan. Although many people with learning disabilities do have good literacy skills, some do not. If written communication is not intrinsic to the job this may prevent potentially good candidates from applying.

If the hours of working have a degree of flexibility, state this in the job description, as for some people with learning disabilities using public transport during peak times is an issue. This will therefore broaden the potential candidate base.

In short, you need to think of the factors within the job which are essential, and those which can be negotiated to accommodate the ideal candidate.

Person specification

A person specification sets out the skills, experience, qualities and qualifications which the ideal candidate for the post should have.

Historically, for many jobs, there is an emphasis on qualifications and work experience. Many people with learning disabilities have neither had the opportunity to access mainstream education resulting in qualifications nor previous work experience. Therefore, you should think carefully about the relevancy of the person specification.

Consider qualities such as hard-working, friendly, motivated and confident. Provide the opportunity for candidates to be considered on past experiences that may not be related to paid employment.

Recruitment advertising

There is little point in developing a post which can accommodate people with learning disabilities if it is not promoted to them through appropriate channels, and in a way that will encourage them to apply.

- Consider advertising through disability groups, charities, Disability Employment support organisations such as Fife EmployAbility Team, or the Disability Employment Advisors at Jobcentre Plus
- Use positive wording to 'welcome applications from people with disabilities.'
- Include credentials such as equal opportunities employer if applicable, for example the disability symbol
- Provide a named contact, address and telephone/email for people who have any questions or concerns about the recruitment process, and state that this person could be contacted for an informal chat about the job. A text phone should also be provided for candidates with a hearing impairment
- Ensure your company website is accessible. Guidelines are set by the Web Access Initiative (www.w3.org/WAI). The RNIB's Web Accessibility Centre also gives advice on good design. (www.rnib.org.uk)

Application forms

People with learning disabilities are more likely to apply for a post if the following suggestions are implemented.

- Applications are commonly submitted in writing. Give adequate space for replies
- Keep the application straightforward. Use plain English, keep language simple and avoid jargon
- Ensure that print is at least size 12 point. Use a font which is clear and easy to read. Always print on matt paper
- Don't use italics or underlining as it makes text more difficult to read
- Don't hyphenate words at the ends of lines
- Avoid asking 'Do you have a disability?'
- Provide scope for the candidate to include additional information if they wish
- Make the application form available in alternative formats on request, for example large print, email, audio cassette, or Braille

These guidelines will improve the accessibility of your information for all potential employees, not just those who have a disability.

Shortlisting

When reviewing an application form or CV for a job that has the potential to be filled by a person with a learning disability it is important to remember:

- Formal education and qualifications may not be an indicator of capability - many people with disabilities have been disadvantaged by the education system.
- Periods of inactivity may be directly related to a disabling experience.
- Don't discount voluntary work or life experience. Candidates may have gained invaluable organisational and creative problem-solving skills in response to their experience of disability.

"It was more than good. It was exciting to be chosen for the interview. I felt like doing cartwheels! It was the first interview I've ever had. Something inside told me to "go for it girl!" It felt good to be wanted. It's a bit of a scary thing to go for because it's something new. I didn't know what to expect but once I sat down and relaxed it wasn't so scary".

Jacqui



Claire Farquhar, Cafe in the Park

SAY
it's workable



Steven Thackray
Bannatyne's, Dunfermline

"I come here every Monday and Wednesday. I like cleaning the gym - the machines. I know everybody here now. I like working with them. That's what friends are for - you have to help them. This is the job I want. I love my job. I just go for it."

"Steven's a very able and competent young man. He's one of our most popular members of staff. He's very reliable and is an all round good worker. Steven gets a very positive reaction from our staff and customers - he's a benefit to our team. There's a role for everyone in society and most businesses are diverse enough to have scope for employment opportunities. It's been a positive experience for the company and for everyone involved."

Keith Battle - General Manager

SAY
it's workable



James Whyte
Frankie & Benny's, Dunfermline

"I do cleaning and help set the restaurant up in the morning. I work three days a week. I do one job at a time - cleaning the buckets, sweeping up, folding napkins, tidying the garden. It keeps me busy. I get a cheque and put it in my bank. I like getting paid! It's good to get out of the house to do some work and do different things. It's important to me."

"James gets on well with the team. He's picked things up well and is always willing to help out. I just treat him the same - like everyone else. It's definitely been a positive thing. Other employers should definitely give it a go - we have, and it's worked very well."

Chevonne Boyle - colleague

The Interview Process

You are now required to consider the impact of a person's disability within the interview process and make reasonable adjustments. Although the applicant may not have indicated that they have a disability on the application form, you must provide them with the opportunity to inform you of any adjustments which may be required to allow them to participate in the interview process. Good interview practice applies to all candidates.

The interview process can be divided into three sections:

- The offer of interview
- The interview location
- The interview content

The offer of interview

You have the opportunity to enquire about reasonable adjustments at this stage. A standard 'invite to interview' letter could include the phrase, 'Please let us know if you require additional assistance or adjustments to enable you to participate in the interview process.' Always include a contact name and a map or simple directions with this letter.

The interview location

Most people with disabilities are very creative in working around the barriers of accessibility and environment. They tend to plan in advance.

Therefore, when arranging and setting up for interview you should give consideration to:

- Availability of disabled car park spaces
- Proximity of public transport stops
- Entrances to buildings
- Toilet facilities
- Room layout

If on the information the applicant has provided you with, you feel the location may be inadequate, inform the person and offer alternative arrangements.

Remember you must ensure that **potential employees** who are disabled, are not significantly disadvantaged as a result of their disability.

"It's a good idea to have a simple map to get you to where your interview is if you've never been there before." **Kenny**

"It helps to have someone you could phone for an informal chat - They could tell you a lot about what the interview would be like and you could ask them things about the job."

Alison

The interview content

People with learning disabilities experience the same emotions when attending interviews as we all do. They feel nervous, excited, worried, concerned, and sometimes scared!

"It was really encouraging to go for an interview. It lets me show that I can do things and that I am fit to do the job. It's a good feeling. It's like a knot in your stomach cos you're nervous at first but it's a good feeling inside - like you've got butterflies. It means a lot to get an interview. It feels like I'm changing parts of my life." **Audrey**

During the interview treat people with learning disabilities the same as you would any other interviewee.

"I might have somebody with me when I arrive, just to give me a wee bit of support. Be sure to speak to me and not the person with me. It would be nice if someone shakes your hand and says 'good morning'. It's a good way to greet someone. It makes me feel good - I feel welcome." **Audrey**

"Just treat me the same way you would anyone else. Be polite and make me feel welcome. Treat me with respect. Look at me when I'm speaking to you. Don't speak too fast. Speak clearly." **Willie**

For many people with learning disabilities, being interviewed for a job is a new

experience. It is helpful if you appreciate this and show support by:

- Letting the person know that it is okay to ask for questions to be repeated or to move on from questions that they cannot answer.
- Speaking directly to the person and not a support worker if they have brought one along.

"Don't make me feel small if I don't answer the questions. That's upsetting. You could say 'Is that question difficult for you?' and if I said 'Yes' you could just move on." **Jacqui**

"People should say what their names are. That would help, as we wouldn't know who they were. They should show you where to sit." **Sarah**

Prejudices and Assumptions

If you have had little or no contact with people with learning disabilities it is important to recognise the assumptions and prejudices that may have an affect on how you communicate with the person. Remember that people with learning disabilities are adults and should be treated as such.

You should:

- use a normal tone of voice, and assume that you will be understood
- keep language simple and to the point - avoid using jargon
- ask a candidate about voluntary work and their life experience - consider these to be just as important when deciding how they fulfil the job criteria
- be patient. It may take more time for an employee with a learning disability to understand questions and provide responses

You shouldn't:

- ask personal questions about someone's disability. It's not relevant, unless it affects their job
- express sympathy or admire someone for being courageous or brave because of their disability

- be patronising or talk to someone like they are a child
- pretend to understand someone if you don't. Don't be embarrassed to say 'Sorry I didn't understand you - could you repeat that please?'

"Eye-contact is important. You should look at the person when you're talking to them. It's off-putting if you don't". Jacqui

Ending The Interview

The interview provides the opportunity for the interviewer and interviewee to discuss any adjustments they feel will need to be made to enable the person to do the job well. This may mean putting an emphasis on verbal rather than written instruction, or putting work schedules in a pictorial format. The person themselves will have a good idea of the adjustments they will need so ask them!

Health Issues

Medical/health questions or medical/health checks should only be necessary if they would apply to all candidates.

Medical history or past sickness absence levels cannot successfully predict future work performance. The candidate may now be managing that disability better, or the

absences could have been related to a former employer's unwillingness to make reasonable adjustments. Appreciate that there could be valid reasons for a sporadic employment history. These could include:

- not taking paid work for fear of losing Social Security Benefits
- time spent gaining education and training for example, as a volunteer
- attending college
- leaving employment due to negative experiences, for example, harassment.

People with learning disabilities can benefit from seeing the job first hand. Offer to show people around where they would be working. Consider the possibility of job trials, especially if the person's disability makes it difficult for them to convey their potential at a standard interview.

"It would help to get shown round the place that you'd be working. It would help me to understand." Willie

"It would help to have some work experience or a trial period to see how I get on." Alison

Offering the Job

For many reasons, applicants may not have declared a hidden disability such as diabetes or a mental health problem during the recruitment process. Many people do not regard their impairment to be a disability. Some are unwilling to disclose this sort of information for fear of being discriminated against. Others feel that their disability has no bearing on their capacity to do the job they are applying for and so is irrelevant.

When offering the job, give every candidate another opportunity to discuss any adjustments they may require.

Once a person with a learning disability has been offered and has accepted employment you will have to give consideration to:

- Induction
- Work colleagues
- Training

The Induction

An induction is an essential stage of an employee's development in getting to know about the organisation and the employer's expectations. It can be daunting, and may involve a vast amount of paperwork and procedural information.

For someone with a learning disability this can be an overwhelming experience.

- consider the way this information is presented
- could the induction be staged over a longer time period?
- could the person have another member of staff assigned to them at this stage for support?
- use pictorial rather than written examples
- provide information in a simple and bulleted format.

Work Colleagues

People with learning disabilities are part of your team and should be treated on an equal par with other work colleagues. This means that they should have opportunities for additional training and activities within the

work place. They should be included within break time and holiday rotas and in social activities.

You are responsible for the actions of your staff. Disability Awareness Training will ensure that your staff have an understanding of disability issues. It will enable them to effectively integrate people with disabilities within the workplace and prevent discriminatory behaviour.

Training

Training is central to the management and development of all employees. To ensure that your employees with learning disabilities meet your work expectations you should:

- deliver the training in a way that the person can understand
- look at your training methods and consider use of pictorial rather than written information
- assign the person a work colleague for additional support
- give the person time to learn and practice newly acquired skills
- repeat instructions
- simplify the tasks, by breaking them down to smaller tasks.

Adapting information into straightforward text and using visual images to convey instructions is not solely for the benefit of a person with a learning disability. All your staff will appreciate it!



Adjustments

- Lowering light switches for wheelchair users.
- Considering modifications to equipment, for example, visible as well as audible fire alarms for hearing impaired workers.
- Consider whether work schedules can be made flexible.
- Make instructions and manuals accessible and easily understood.

Communication

- Do not correct someone's speech or attempt to speak for them.
- Never finish someone's sentences for them.
- Do not look worried, concerned or patronising.
- If the interviewee has a visual impairment and does not extend a handshake, express a verbal welcome.
- When offering seating, place the interviewee's hand on the back or arm of the chair, and verbally tell them where the chair is.
- If interviewing in a group situation, provide a verbal indication by announcing the name of the person being addressed.
- Do not feed, pat or distract a guide dog.
- If the interviewee will rely on lip-reading, always face the person during the

interview and when guiding round the interview site.

- Be prepared to write a message, if being understood becomes difficult.
- Shake hands, even if the interviewee has limited hand use, or an artificial limb. A left-hand shake is acceptable. If the person cannot shake hands, touch the person on the shoulder or arm to welcome.
- Allow a person with a visual impairment to take your arm (at or around the elbow), allowing you to guide them.
- Walking devices such as frames, canes or crutches are personal property and should be regarded as such - do not handle them unless requested.
- Do not lean on a wheelchair, or assume that a wheelchair user will require you to push them. Never push someone in a wheelchair unless you have asked if they require your support. Do not pat wheelchair users on the shoulder - this is patronising. When talking to a wheelchair user, try to sit on a chair at a similar level. If chairs are not available, stand a few paces back.



Diversity in Employment

Employment is something which we are expected to do, a way for us to contribute to society and a way to be included. As adults, society expects that we will seek and sustain employment.

Many people with disabilities have the same expectations.

They also want to achieve their employment hopes and aspirations. Unfortunately as a result of prejudice, discrimination and misconceptions people with disabilities are half as likely to realise their employment goals.

In Fife there are over 24,000 people on incapacity benefits. For many of these people it needn't be an individual's disability which is debilitating, but society's failure to tackle the barriers of inequality.

Promoting full participation in employment is paramount to Fife's future economic success.

People with disabilities, employers and organisations such as Fife Employability Team are working together to make employment for people with disabilities a reality.

By implementing the advice provided in this guide, and developing inclusive recruitment practices your organisation can help Fife create an equal and financially successful society. This will benefit us all.

"It's good business sense to employ people with disabilities. We have had a hugely positive response from customers. My responsibility as an employer is to ensure there are no barriers to individuals doing a good job. Our disabled employees are long-standing, respected members of the team, and they're amongst the most reliable, conscientious employees we have. It's a bonus to have employees who have surpassed my expectations of what they can do."

Adam Buchanan-Smith - McDonald's Restaurant, Dunfermline
Overall Winner of Fife Business Diversity Award



Kevin Cowie, McDonald's restaurant



Jeanette Walker
Davaar House Hotel, Dunfermline

"I do the ironing - the pillowslips and napkins. I've been working here a year now - every Wednesday afternoon. When it comes around to 3 o'clock it's coffee break - then it's back to the ironing, til 4! I keep myself busy all the time. It's enjoyable. I like working."

"Jeanette has fitted in very well with our team and has a good work rapport with everyone. Jeanette working here makes our staff more aware of the need for people with disabilities to be out there working. When she first came here she was very quiet and shy, but now I see her with more confidence. It's good for her self-esteem and gives her responsibility. People with disabilities have a lot to offer employers."

Doreen Jarvie - owner



Stuart Fernie
King Malcolm Hotel, Dunfermline

"I'm an odd job man here. I work two mornings a week. It's brilliant - it gets me out of the house. You get to meet new people. The staff are fantastic. I work to my abilities. It gives me experience and that's essential. This helps me on the road to work. Employers shouldn't be shy - just give people with disabilities a try!"

"Stuart does a great job - he's fitted in well with the rest of the staff. This has been a very positive experience. Stuart's sense of humour and personality have been a great asset to our team. Employers shouldn't be worried. Fife EmployAbility Team have given us a lot of advice and support. Stuart has not been any different from any other employee."

Alison Currie - General Manager

Support Available from Fife EmployAbility Team

Fife EmployAbility Team, part of Fife Council's Social Work Service, manages SAY It's Workable.

Fife EmployAbility Team is one of Scotland's largest local authority providers of employment services to people, and employers of people with disabilities.

By offering practical, and in some instances financial support, we help you develop solutions which overcome the barriers faced by people with disabilities who wish to work.

You can be advised and guided through a range of services aimed at helping you:

- to support people with disabilities in the workplace
- to implement a Disability Awareness Training Programme
- to retain existing employees who have developed disability or illness
- to access financial assistance
- to access specialist equipment.

The support you can provide

You as an employer can provide a number of work opportunities. These are:

Work tasters/placements

One of the best ways to allay any concerns or doubts about employing someone with a disability is to offer them a work placement

opportunity within your workplace. This usually lasts for up to eight weeks and gives potential employees the chance to demonstrate their skills and abilities, improve their confidence, improve existing skills and develop new skills.

A work placement should ideally be arranged through a support organisation such as Fife EmployAbility Team. The potential employee would have an allocated Disability Employment Coordinator who would be able to monitor progress, provide support within the workplace, and help add the details to the person's CV.

Permitted Work

Permitted work allows people with disabilities to undertake some work whilst maintaining their benefits. Hours are restricted, sometimes to only a few hours a week.

This can be the first step towards financial independence for people on incapacity benefits.

You can help by thinking about the jobs within your workplace which can be covered in a few hours, but which would be difficult to recruit for. Marketing these posts as being particularly suited to people with disabilities could be a very creative solution to a resolving a difficult recruitment issue.

Open employment

Ideally:

- All individuals with disabilities would be able to progress into open employment by competing for vacancies in the labour market.
- All employers would have the capacity to accommodate individuals with various abilities, thus creating diversified and competitive workforces.

Fife EmployAbility Team will place an emphasis on helping people to progress into open, mainstream employment, where this is the most suitable option for the individual.



Darren Hatch, Safeway

celebrating diversity in the workplace





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