

Further Information

For more information, contact your local disability employment organisation representative or

NIUSE: Telephone: 028 7137 7709 Email: info@niuse.org.uk

Local contact:

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Job Match is delivered by Disability Action in partnership with the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment.



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Employing People with Disabilities

A Positive Action Guide for Employers





The Business Benefit

Employing people with disabilities makes good business sense – enhancing diversity and building both a company’s capacity and profitability.¹

By opening opportunities to people with disabilities you can widen your recruitment pool and meet your specific business needs.

“We are a small business in Co Tyrone. Working in partnership with Disability Action’s Job Match staff, we were able to attract motivated people with the skills and aptitudes we need to make our business a success.”

Emma & Irene McKeagney, Fit to Snack

This five step recruitment guide has been designed to help employers to match the right people with the right jobs, achieving positive outcomes for everyone.





Help is at hand – There is a wide range of advice and support available from disability organisations, the Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE) and the Department for Communities (DfC).

Working together, we have designed a recruitment model to guide employers through each step of the process, whether you are employing one person or planning a large recruitment exercise. The model has been used successfully with employers including Belfast City Council, Premier Inn, Fitzers and Queens University to recruit disabled employees.

“The disability organisations worked together to select the most suitable candidates for the programmes and provided both the participants and the Council with advice and support throughout the process.”

Alison Long, Senior HR and OD Advisor, Belfast City Council

What is Positive Action?

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), employers have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and can also consider positive action.

Positive action measures may involve treating disabled people more favourably than people who are not disabled during a recruitment process or during the course of employment. Through such action, employers may be able to increase the diversity of their workforce and promote equality of opportunity in employment for disabled people.

Positive action measures can address the persistent employment gap experienced by people with disabilities.²



5 Steps to Positive Action Recruitment

1. Contact Us

You may already be in contact with your local disability organisation or Department for Communities staff who will be able to help.

If not, you should contact NIUSE who will act as your single point of contact for a network of disability organisations that assist people with disabilities to access and stay in employment. We can advise you on what is involved and support you through each step of the recruitment and selection process.



“The Department for Communities work very closely with the disability sector to promote services and programmes, as well as providing direct and ongoing support to employers to assist them to recruit and retain people with disabilities. This partnership has proved to be very successful.”

Department for Communities

2. Recruitment Planning

Your local disability organisation or NIUSE will meet with you to find out what your specific recruitment needs are, and will advise and support you on how to identify what positive actions may be taken and to plan to put them into place during the recruitment process.

This can include:-

- **Designing and delivering pre-employment training** to give the potential candidate an understanding of what is involved in the job
- **Offering guaranteed interviews** for candidates with disabilities
- **Ring fencing jobs** to provide employment opportunities exclusively for people with disabilities
- **Adjusting the person specification**, for example accepting voluntary work and/or lived experience instead of paid work experience, and/or waiving qualifications that are not essential to the job
- **Adjusting the job description** to focus on core tasks. We sometimes refer to this as **Job Carving**.

“This experience has helped us at Corry’s Chemist to feel more confident about employing someone with a learning disability. Without the work experience and support of Mencap we wouldn’t have seen the job seeker’s capabilities and therefore more than likely wouldn’t have offered paid work.”

Ashley Sproule, Manager, Corry’s Chemist

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland can also provide guidance on reviewing your recruitment and positive action policy free of charge. They can advise on such measures as advertising widely, welcome statements for people with disabilities, guaranteed interviews, and ring-fencing opportunities.

For further information contact:

Telephone: 028 9050 0600
or visit **www.equalityni.org**

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

3. Finding Candidates

For large recruitment exercises, NIUSE can help you by co-ordinating applications from people with disabilities. We can circulate the employment opportunity to disability organisations, outlining the main skills, competencies and requirements for the post/s. This will ensure you have access to a broad pool of disabled candidates.

For small recruitment exercises, disability organisations can put forward suitable candidates and support them through the process.



This can include:

- Reviewing existing caseloads and **identifying suitable candidates** who meet the person specification and are interested in the post
- **Submitting** one or more candidates who meet the criteria ensuring a good job match is achieved for the employer and candidate
- **Providing** candidates with support during the application process.

“Employing people with disabilities has had a real positive impact on all the team, and the team members with disabilities feel part of our Premier Inn family.”

**Graeme Callender,
Operations Manager, Premier Inn**

4. Making Reasonable Adjustments & Positive Actions

Advice and support on reasonable adjustments and/or positive actions will ensure that the selection and recruitment process runs smoothly. This can include:

- **Adjusting the selection process** to allow applicants to show their potential, for example, assessing the candidate on the job through a work trial rather than interview
- **Interview arrangements** – ensuring the interview is suitable for the individual disabled candidate (e.g. additional time, accessible location and environment, nature of questions, disability awareness training for the interview panel)
- Allowing a **support worker** to attend the interview to support the individual
- Ensuring that **aptitude/selection tests** do not disadvantage a candidate with a disability and provide reasonable adjustments to suit the individual
- Providing **communication support** at interview - the Department for Communities can fund a sign language interpreter or lip reader through Access to Work.³

“With the help of Supported Employment Solutions (SES)⁴ our Disability Placement Scheme demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities get the same chances as everyone else. By breaking down the initial barrier a number of people have gone on to secure paid employment within the health service and other employment setting.”

Anne McGlade, Health and Social Care Board



5. Ongoing Support

If required, your local disability organisation can continue to provide ongoing advice and support for you or your new employee/s.

“As a Manager with no experience of learning disability, Triangle Supported Employment has been very supportive throughout, offering advice and guidance, and ongoing support. The support from Triangle and the job seekers’ work ethic and positive attitude has been the reason why their employment has been so successful.”

Naomi Hamilton, Bob and Bert’s

The Department for Communities (DfC) is committed to increasing the employment opportunities for people with disabilities through its “Supporting Equality through Inclusive Employment” an Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.⁵

It also provides a range of in-work support such as:-

- **Workable NI**
- **Access to Work**
- **Job Introduction Scheme**

For further detail on the full range of the Department for Communities services visit: www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/employment-support/work-schemes-and-programmes

Reference

- ¹ “The Purple Workforce: The Impact of Employing Disabled People”, 2017, Disability Action
<http://www.disabilityaction.org/services-and-projects/employment-advocacy/employment-quick-guides/>
- ² “Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland” Equality Commission for N Ireland, May 2018,
<https://www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Employment>
- ³ Access to Work, DfC provides a range of support to disabled people and employers including communication support
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/access-work-practical-help-work>
- ⁴ Supported Employment Solutions is a consortium of 7 Supported Employment organisations:- Action Mental Health (lead partner) & Cedar Foundation (lead partner), Action on Hearing Loss, Mencap, NOW Group, Orchardville Society and RNIB <http://www.sesni.org.uk>
- ⁵ “Supporting Equality through Inclusive Employment” an Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, Department for Employment and Learning, 2016
<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/disability-employment-strategy>

