



**MEDIGOLD
HEALTH**

Disability Inclusive Practice

A Guide for Business

**How to make your business
disability inclusive and
successfully attract, recruit,
support and retain disabled talent.**

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Are you missing out on attracting and retaining a motivated and talented segment of the working population?

Research shows that people with disabilities often demonstrate higher levels of motivation, innovation, loyalty, problem-solving skills and creativity, yet 50% of disabled people in the UK are unemployed or feel hindered by barriers in the workplace.

This comprehensive guide will show you how to make your business disability inclusive, and explore simple changes which can help your business attract, recruit, support and retain disabled talent.

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DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

Let's start with some facts and figures about disability.

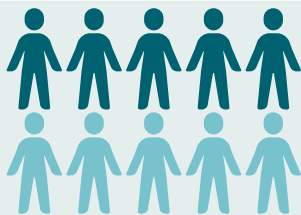


More than **one in five** of us will be affected by disability at some point in our lives, and 4.6 million people in the UK have a disability.

Family Resources Survey 2022

8.4 million people of working age are disabled, representing **20%** of the working-age population.

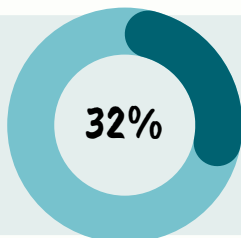
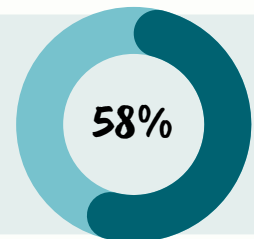
Disabled people in employment House of Commons Briefing Paper 2021



In 2022, the disability employment gap was 29.8%, with 52.6% of disabled individuals employed compared to 82.5% of non-disabled.

Employment of disabled people 2022

58% of disabled people feel at risk of losing their jobs, and 53% have experienced bullying or harassment at work because of their impairments. *Scope 2017*



32% of disabled people, and **22%** of non disabled people feel there is a lot of prejudice against disabled people.

Scope - Disability Perception Gap 2018

1 in 3 employees with a health condition had not discussed it with their employer, even where it had affected their work.

Health and wellbeing at work: a survey of employees, 2014



So, what do these statistics tell us?



Every business has disabled employees – whether they know it or not, and any employee can acquire a disability. With an aging workforce it is becoming more and more likely there will be an increase in the number of people acquiring a disability whilst working.

There are disabled people who want to work – but it is not always easy for them to find a job as there are barriers in the recruitment process and in the workplace which makes it harder for them.



Many disabled people feel uncomfortable disclosing their disability – which means employers cannot offer them support or make adjustments, which then increases the risk that they will be absent from or even leave work.

These findings show the need for improved societal and workplace action regarding the recruitment, retention and support offered to disabled employees and the need for more employers to be disability inclusive.

WHY SHOULD ORGANISATIONS BE DISABILITY INCLUSIVE?

Being disability inclusive involves fostering a culture that embraces diversity, equality and accessibility for employees regardless of their physical or mental abilities, ensuring everyone in the workplace can thrive, and when employees thrive, businesses reap the benefits.

Tapping into a wider talent pool

It expands the talent pool by attracting skilled individuals with disabilities and employees who want to work for an inclusive and diverse business, tapping into a segment of the workforce that might otherwise be overlooked.



Creates a barrier-free working environment

Implementing accessible facilities, technologies, and inclusive policies creates an environment where employees of all abilities can perform their roles effectively and comfortably.



Enhances productivity

Creating a barrier-free working environment and ensuring staff and managers have appropriate tools and training will ensure every employee can contribute and enhance productivity.



Improve employee morale and job satisfaction

By fostering a disability-inclusive workplace culture, businesses create an environment where employees, including those with disabilities, feel valued, supported and empowered, leading to higher job satisfaction and improved morale.



Increases employee retention

Offering reasonable accommodations and support for disabled employees demonstrates a commitment to their wellbeing, contributing to a positive work environment that encourages individuals to stay.



Harnesses different talents

Embracing disability inclusion allows organisations to tap into a wealth of abilities, perspectives and unique problem-solving approaches that individuals with disabilities often bring to the table..

Reduces business costs

Higher employee retention and workplace adjustments help reduce costs of sickness, absence and recruitment.



Enhancing different talents and transferable skills

Provides opportunities for mentoring and coaching other staff and managers to enhance their knowledge and skills for broader application.

The benefits don't stop there. Becoming a disability-inclusive employer also brings the added benefit of valuing disabled customers, offering numerous advantages for your business, such as:

- Reaching a wider market
- Creating better, user-centred products that meet customer needs
- Delivering tailored services that are often better for everyone
- Providing clear and accessible communications
- Improving customer retention, appealing to disabled customers and those who value social responsibility
- Enhancing reputation and making your brand stand out
- Accessing the "Purple Pound," which is the estimated £274 billion annual spending power of disabled households in the UK.

HOW TO ATTRACT, RECRUIT AND RETAIN DISABLED EMPLOYEES

Attract

The first thing to consider is the first impression—what would a prospective disabled applicant think about the business at a first glance?

They'll likely visit your website and social media, hoping to find statements about diversity and inclusion, strong values and mission, along with case studies and role models featuring disabled people within the organisation.

It's really important that your website is accessible and includes a dedicated page about inclusivity and accessibility. Ideally, the site should be compatible with screen reading software, have a clear structure, and offer good navigation tools, such as skip-to-content links. Including subtitles or sign language in videos can also make a big difference.

If your business is already Disability Confident, be sure to display that logo prominently with a link to more information about the scheme.

Next, we need to evaluate whether the business is effectively reaching a disabled audience. While broad platforms like Indeed or Jobcentre Plus can help increase visibility, best practices include using disability-specific sites like [Evenbreak](#) or [RIDI](#), and leveraging employment programs such as [Restart](#) and the [Work and Health Programme](#).

Additionally, it's important to clearly communicate that adjustments to the recruitment process can be made. Display a contact number and email address so people can easily ask for assistance.



Adverts, job descriptions and person specifications

It's important to think about the language used, the duties described, and the skills required. The aim is to attract a diverse pool of applicants, so it's essential to use inclusive language that welcomes everyone. Keep job descriptions clear and straightforward, avoiding jargon, technical terms, abbreviations, or acronyms.

When outlining duties, focus on what's essential, frequent, and regular. Mentioning tasks that are only done once or twice a year, which some might find challenging, could discourage potential applicants, when in reality, these tasks could be easily adjusted within the team.

It's a good idea to specify both essential and desirable skills, so applicants aren't discouraged if they lack a specific skill. Emphasising generic skills over specific methods, software, or equipment allows candidates to demonstrate their abilities in their own way. This approach encourages fresh ideas and alternative ways of working, which is why attracting disabled talent is so important.

Lastly, be mindful of unconscious bias in your word choices. For example, using terms like "drive" might unintentionally exclude those who can't drive. Use inclusive language, like "travel for work," to ensure your job description is accessible and much more inclusive to all.

Applications



Whenever possible, the application process should be accessible. Online processes should work with assistive technology, but alternative ways to apply should be accepted, such as submitting a Word document application or applying by telephone.

All documents used in the recruitment process, including job descriptions, person specifications, and application forms, should be available in an accessible format. It's important to note that under legal regulations, you can only inquire about disability before making a job offer for specific purposes, such as facilitating necessary adjustments.

So, any questions in the application process should focus on what adjustments are required rather than asking for details about disability.

Assessments / Screening

If online screening, tests, or assessments are part of the recruitment process, they may pose a barrier for disabled applicants. Businesses should evaluate the necessity of these screenings or assessments and consider if they can be omitted or adjusted to accommodate disabled applicants.

Businesses participating in the Disability Confident scheme should provide guaranteed interviews to disabled individuals who meet the minimum job criteria, thus eliminating the need for additional screening processes.

Interviews

Once you reach the interview stage, there should be an opportunity for the individual to disclose their disability and request adjustments. These adjustments could include:

- Providing an accessible location, considering not only wheelchair access but also quiet environments with good lighting (especially important for those who may be lip-reading).
- Adjusting start times to accommodate factors such as avoiding rush-hour commutes or managing medication side effects.
- Shortening the interview duration or incorporating breaks during the meeting.
- Allowing the applicant to use notes, such as their CV or application form, as a memory aid.
- Permitting a supporter to accompany them for moral support and assistance in explaining or rephrasing questions (not to answer on their behalf).
- Providing an interpreter for applicants with hearing impairments.
- Ensuring interviewers use clear language, avoiding jargon, technical terms, or acronyms, and if necessary, rephrasing questions to ensure full understanding.



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You can connect with us via:

Tel: 0333 567 1910

Email: workplacetraining@medigold-health.com

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