Lead Toolkit

For employing disabled people

www.msd.govt.nz/lead

Introduction

Employers will drive the change to increase the employment of disabled people.

Employing disabled New Zealanders gives the public confidence that the employers understand, and are responsive to, the needs of our diverse citizens. Disabled customers and their families/whānau, friends and colleagues want services that meet their needs. All customers prefer to deal with people who genuinely understand their situation. A workforce that better reflects New Zealand's diversity provides a 'real' perspective of what services meet a wide spectrum of needs.

The New Zealand government on behalf of all New Zealanders has ratified the United National Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The UNCRPD recognises the importance of providing equality of opportunity.

With disabled people making up nearly a quarter of the working aged population it is important for employers to tap into this pool of people who can make valuable contributors to New Zealand.

This Toolkit is a valuable resource for employers, leaders, managers and human resource professionals to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for disabled people. In the Toolkit, the reasons employers may overlook employing disabled New Zealanders is addressed, including (false) beliefs about the costliness and difficulty of employing disabled people, or unwarranted health and safety concerns.

Another resource that sits alongside this Toolkit is a video, *Taking the Lead*, which showcases disabled people who have been successfully employed in the Public Service. The positive and inspiring stories of these employees truly illustrate that the employment of disabled people is a win–win situation for everyone.

It is expected that Employers will drive the change needed in their organisations to increase the employment of disabled people and they are asked to step up and make this happen. This will make a huge difference to the lives of disabled people and their families and add real value to your organisation. We encourage you to take the time to have a look through this Toolkit and work with your leadership, management and human resource teams to ensure that it is widely distributed and used by your employees.

It's not only the right thing to do; it's the bright thing to do.

Busting the myths about disabled employees

Myth 1

Disabled people don't want to or can't work.

Fact 1

The 2013 Census indicated that 75 percent of disabled people want to work and yet the 2017 Labour Force Survey has highlighted that only 25 percent of disabled people participate in employment. The financial opportunity cost to New Zealand of this employment and education differential for disabled people has been estimated at around NZ$11.7b.Technology has also removed many barriers faced by disabled people, enabling more people to reach their full potential.

Myth 2

Providing accommodations for disabled people is expensive.

Fact 2

Most disabled people don't need anything different to perform their jobs, and for those who do, the cost is usually minimal. Only 10% of disabled workers under the age of 65 reported that they had modifications or specialist equipment in their workplace. The most common reasonable accommodation is flexible working arrangements. An Australian study found that accommodations for disabled people are financially cost-neutral or cost-beneficial to the organisation as a whole.[1] Technology has also removed many barriers faced by disabled people, enabling more people to reach their full potential.

Graffam, J., Smith, K., Shinkfield, A.and Polzin, U. (2002). *Employer benefits and costs of employing someone with a disability.* Melbourne: Institute of Disability Studies, Deakin University. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 17, 251-263.

Myth 3

Disabled employees are a greater health and safety risk than employees without disabilities.

Fact 3

Evidence shows that disabled employees have fewer health and safety issues, because in managing their impairment they have developed strategies to address health and safety risks. Employers surveyed in the Australian Study reported on average that disabled employees have one-sixth the recorded occupational health and safety incidents compared with the 'average' non-disabled employee. They were also cheaper to maintain in employment (because of lower recruitment, safety and insurance costs).

Myth 4

Disabled employees have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.

Fact 4

Studies show that disabled people actually have lower rates of absenteeism, with the Australian study finding that they were absent from work 15% less than their colleagues without disabilities.

Myth 5

The Human Rights Act 1993 forces employers to hire unqualified disabled individuals.

Fact 5

An individual must first meet all requirements for a job and be able to perform its essential functions with reasonable accommodations. Support Funds can be used for reasonable accommodation and training. If at any point in the selection process it becomes apparent that a candidate cannot perform the core requirements for the job, then, regardless of whether they are disabled or not, the organisation is under no obligation to hire them. Support Funds are administered by Workbridge **https://supportfunds.co.nz/**

Myth 6

Under the Employment Relations Act 2002, an employer cannot terminate the employment of a disabled employee.

Fact 6

Employers can terminate employment of disabled employee under three conditions:

1. The termination is unrelated to the disability, or
2. The employee does not meet legitimate requirements for the job, such as performance or production standards, with a reasonable accommodation, or
3. The employee poses a direct threat to health or safety in the workplace because of their disability.

Contents

1 About this Toolkit

1.1 What is disability?

Nearly 1 in 4 New Zealanders identifies as having a disability.

There are many different kinds of disability – including physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health related.

A disability may be visible or hidden, permanent or temporary and could have a minor or major impact on a person's life. A disability may affect mobility, ability to learn, ability to see or ability to communicate easily.

Who are disabled people?

Disabled people are throughout our community: men, women, and children; employers and employees; students and teachers; people of all ethnicities and religions; customers and citizens.

No two people are the same, and no two people with the same disability experience it in the same way.
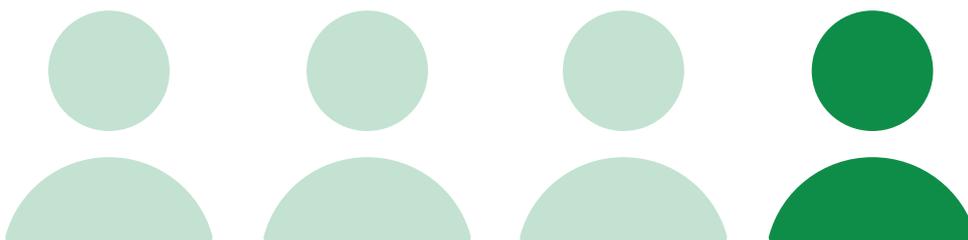
The facts

21% — 21% of people aged 15 to 64 years are disabled.
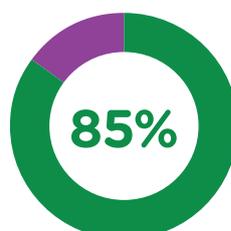
85% — 85% of disabled 15 to 64 year olds are not disabled at birth.

24% — 24% of people in New Zealand are disabled.
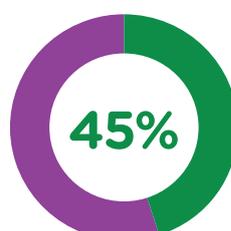
45% — 45% of disabled adults are employed compared with 72% of non-disabled adults.
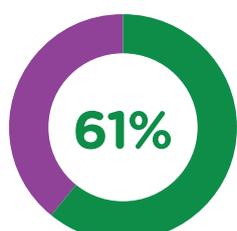
61% — 61% of disabled people aged 15 to 64 were working in paid jobs in 2013.
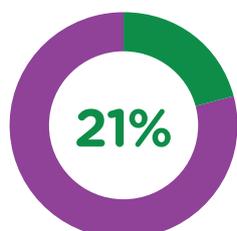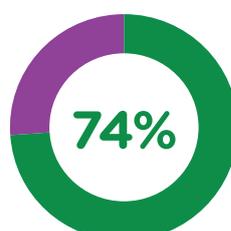
74% — 74% of those who weren't employed said they would like to work if a job was available.

3.7 – 6.9%[2] of employees in the State Sector identify as being disabled.

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2 This estimate is from a Human Right Commission (2014) survey covering 88% of the public service. It is acknowledged as an underestimate due to challenges collecting reliable data. The State Services Commission, now known as Te Kawa Mataaho the Public Service Commission, stopped collecting data in 2002 because of these challenges. At that time, 6.9% identified as being disabled, down from 10.6% in 1998.

1.2 How this Toolkit can help you

This is a 'how to' Toolkit for employing disabled people.

Disabled people are a fabulous untapped talent pool of loyal and committed employees. They bring a perspective that can help transform an organisation's culture, client relations and performance for the better.

Employers are in a unique position to take a leadership role in employing disabled people and take advantage of their skills.

This Toolkit contains a range of information and resources for leadership teams, managers and human resources teams to help them employ disabled people within their organisations.

Leadership

Disabled people account for 24% of the New Zealand population.[3] Taking the lead in increasing the number of disabled people employed will enhance your reputation and assist you to be more client-centred.

Employees look to their leadership team to drive and champion change. This Toolkit explains how leadership teams can drive the change within their own organisations, as well as the business case for why they should.

Human resources

Human resources teams have a responsibility to attract the best possible candidates, including disabled people, for roles within their organisation. This Toolkit provides advice about how to ensure that your recruitment process provides access to the talent pool of disabled people.

Managers

Managers need to attract the best people to their teams. Disabled people are a fabulous pool of untapped talent of loyal and committed employees. An important part of any manager's role is getting the best from all employees, including disabled employees.

This Toolkit builds managers' confidence to recruit the best people for their jobs, including disabled people. It also helps managers to work effectively with all employees by using an adaptive and flexible management style, so all staff can reach their full potential.

1.3 Toolkit components

Leadership

Human Resources

Managers

Toolkit

Video

Take the lead
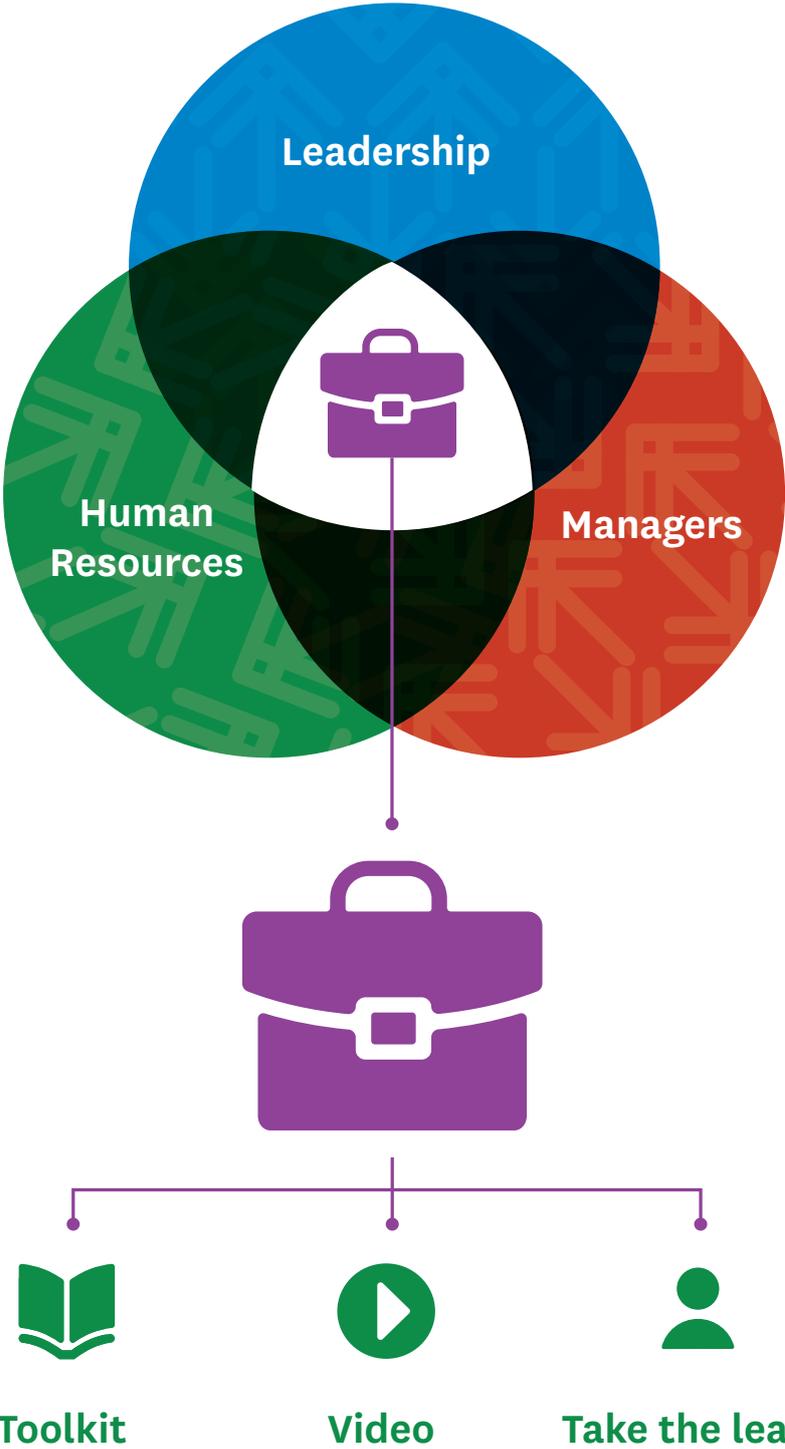
2 Employing disabled people - committed leadership

2.1 A 5-step plan for the leadership team

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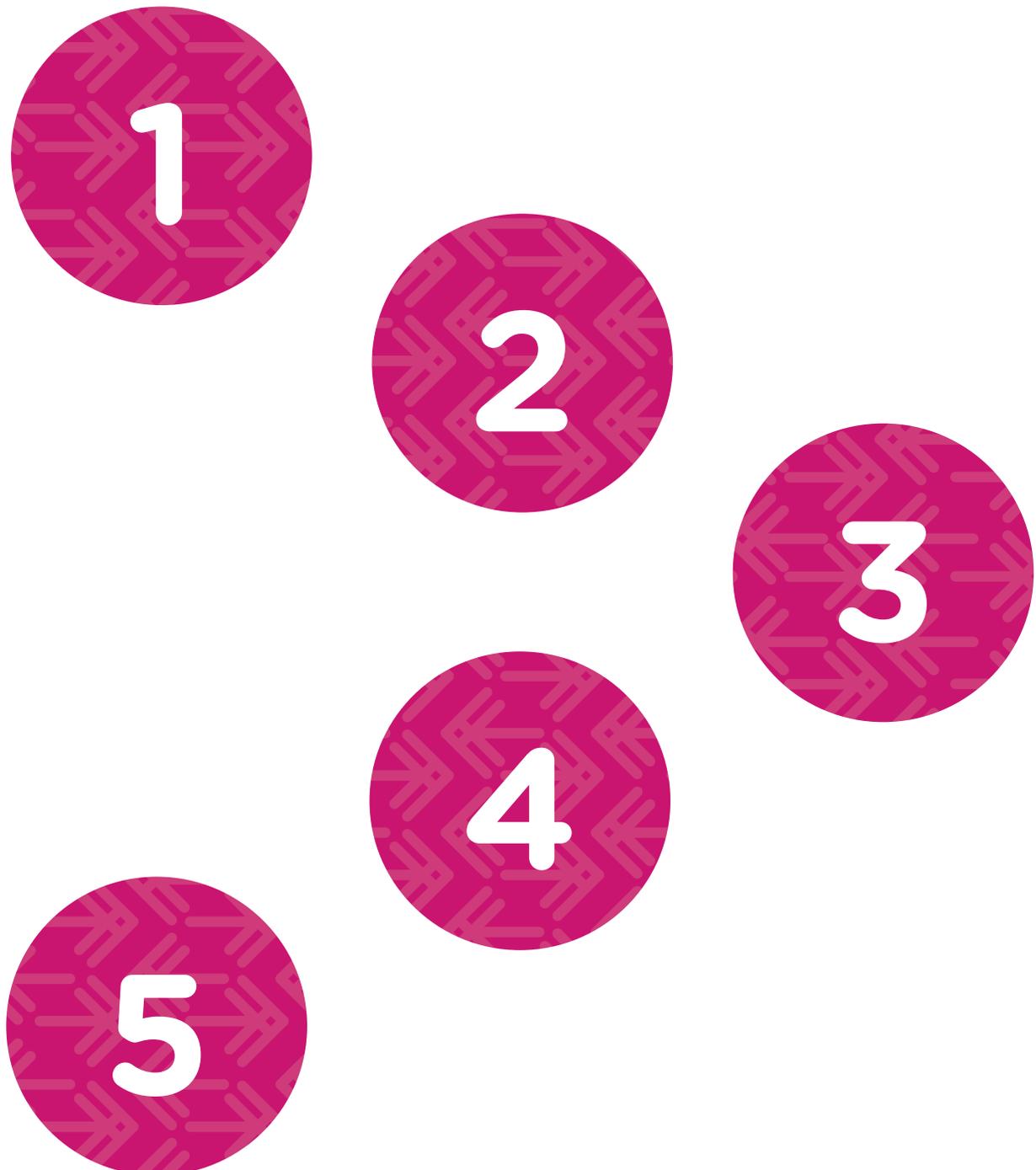
This 5-step plan outlines a framework for how to become an inclusive organisation.

This section provides leadership teams with important tools on how to provide a clear commitment to their organisation about employing more disabled people and retaining existing disabled employees. It outlines both how this can be achieved and why it is beneficial for their organisation.

Nominating a sponsor from within the leadership team who can take ownership is a good strategy to increase employment of disabled people.

A designated sponsor can help monitor progress on, and report back to, an organisation's leadership team.

This 5-step plan outlines a framework for becoming an inclusive organisation is on the following pages.[4]

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4 This was originally developed by the Employers' Disability Network, and can be accessed from
   https://www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/employment-for-disabled-people/plan-to-become-a-disability-confident-organisation/

1

Step 1

Buy in

A successful senior management group has a strong and clear approach to increasing the employment of disabled people. Such an approach should be reflected throughout the organisation.

This approach should include:

- Developing a business case for employing disabled people. (Full details about building a business case is set out in section 2 of this Toolkit.)

- Amending the organisation's diversity policy to include disability. (The Ministry of Social Development's diversity policy is a good example to refer to.)

- Developing and publishing an accessibility plan. Westpac have a great example of an accessibility plan.

https://www.westpac.com.au/about-westpac/westpac-group/corporate-governance/Accessibility/accessibility-action-plan/

2

Step 2

Understand

Identify what progress your organisation has made in creating an inclusive environment for disabled people and which areas require further development, using a checklist. You could use this checklist to rate the organisation's ability to attract and retain disabled people.

Get the "Checklist for assessing an organisation's ability to attract and retain disabled people" at:

https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/information-and-support/index.html

3 **Step 3**

Develop

The information from the checklist can be used to develop your action plan:

Accessibility – Make your environment accessible, including facilities, information and IT

Disability responsiveness training – Build your understanding of disability

Recruitment – Recruit more disabled people

Retaining your existing employees – Keep your disabled staff, including those who acquire a disability while working for you

Data on the number of disabled employees – Measure how many disabled people you already employ by conducting a confidential staff survey.

A free self-assessment is available to all organisations. By answering 10 questions you can get a snapshot of your current performance against key access and inclusion criteria. It also provides valuable information on how to progress.

Have a go at the quick self-assessment and see where your organisation fits.

https://www.and.org.au/pages/access-inclusion-index.html

Step 4

Identify

A number of organisations can provide support and assistance to disabled employees or can help you recruit disabled people for available positions:

Workbridge

www.workbridge.co.nz/

Workbridge is a not-for-profit organisation that can assist you with finding disabled employees, providing you with advice and support on recruitment and follow-up support after hiring. They also administer Support Funds which can help with additional costs.

Supported Employment agencies

http://nzdsn.org.nz/providers/

Supported Employment agencies are organisations that can assist you with finding disabled employees, providing you with advice and support on recruitment and follow-up support after hiring.

ACC

acc.co.nz

ACC can help with modifications and provide advice about how to assist employees who have acquired a disability through injury to return to work.

Work and Income

workandincome.govt.nz

Work and Income can provide a modification grant, work brokers to help you find employees with the right skills, or provide wage subsidies.

Additional Resources

Other information resources are also available to employers, such as help from other employers. Your organisation could learn from others' successes by:

- reading other employers' success stories about how they have successfully employed disabled people.

- joining employer networks for employers who share the vision of improving the use of the resources offered by disabled people.

www.belab.co.nz

Step 5

5

Monitor

The Checklist will provide the organisation with a tool to monitor improvements. This information can be used to update your Action Plan.

One important measure in the checklist is knowing how many disabled employees are in your workforce. If you conduct a confidential staff survey, you can use the result as a benchmark. By conducting regular surveys, you can then track your progress at increasing the number of disabled employees within your organisation.

Sharing and monitoring disability information

How you measure the number of disabled people employed in your organisation is a challenging question. The Australian Disability Network has developed a report which includes a survey that can be used with employees.

Below are links to the report and an associated video:

and.org.au/infosharing

youtube.com/watch?v=Z1-0Mz1i4_k

Additional resource

Leadership's role in increasing diversity

Business Council of Australia's report Recognising ability: business and the employment of people with disability looks at the role business can play in increasing workforce participation and inclusion for people with disability. The website includes a video of employers talking about their experiences.

www.bca.com.au/media/recognising-ability-business-and-the-employment-of-people-with-disability

2.2 The business case for employing disabled people

Employing disabled people allows organisations to attract new skills and gain new and valuable perspectives.

Employing disabled people not only increases the level of talent, but gains loyal and committed employees. There are many ways in which organisations can benefit from employing disabled people.

1 Improved client relations

2 Strategic benefits

3 Increased innovation

4 Enhanced reputation

5 Legal benefits

6 Economic benefits

7 Social benefits

8 Ethical benefits

9 Professional benefits
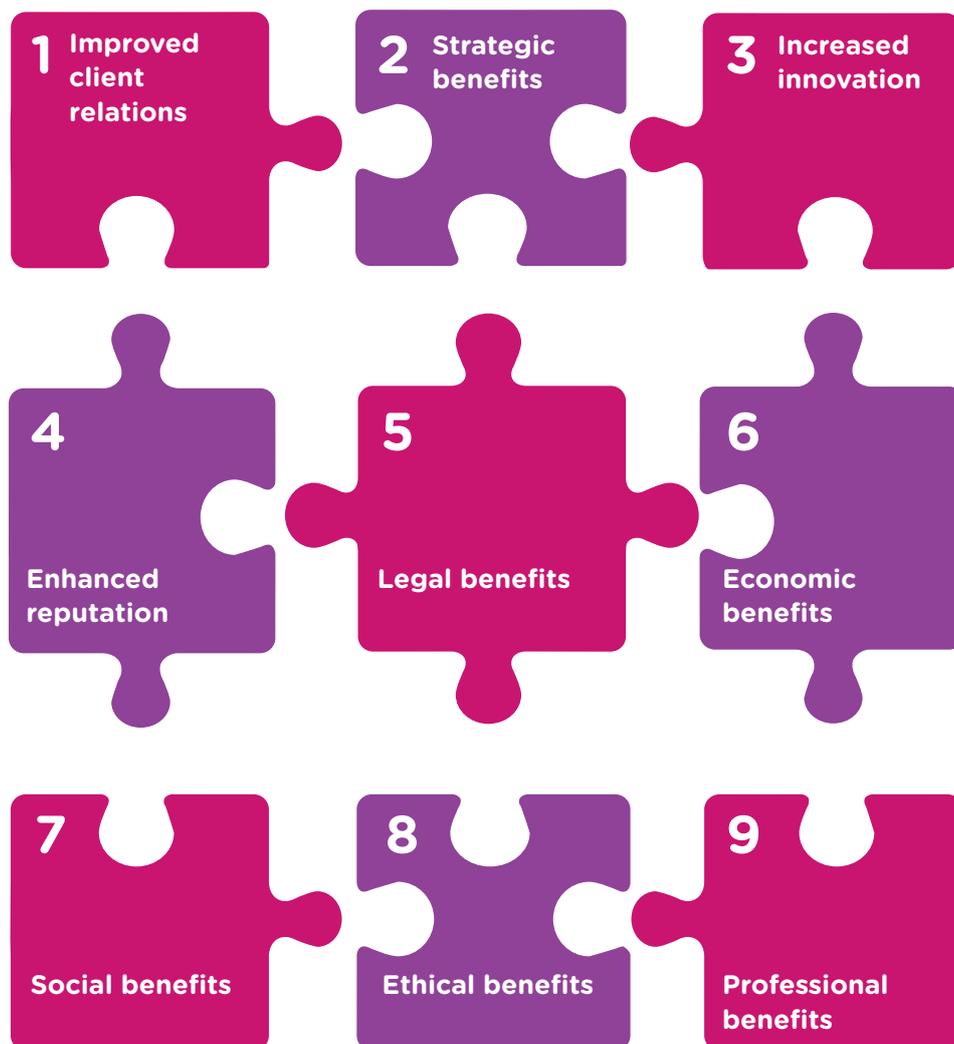
Improved client relations

A workforce that better reflects New Zealand's diversity provides a 'real' perspective of what services meet a wide spectrum of needs. Disabled people and their families/whānau, friends and colleagues want services that meet their needs. All people prefer to deal with staff who genuinely understand their situation.

Employing disabled people will help your organisation to:

- understand their customers
- mirror the community
- build positive relationships with clients
- respond appropriately to disabled clients' needs
- design and deliver appropriate services for all clients.

Strategic benefits

New Zealanders expect employers will be knowledgeable about disability and employ disabled people. Disabled people expect to be included as stakeholders and employees.

By employing more disabled people, employers will:

- make the most of the available talent
- gain more diversity of perspectives
- understand how disability affects people, their interaction with organisations and their use of technology
- create policies and services which are responsive to disabled people's needs
- develop new strategies to attract and retain qualified staff
- build better relationships with stakeholders.

Increased innovation

Disabled people bring unique experiences and understanding which can transform a workplace and enhance policies and services.

Benefits include:

- more efficient and effective business processes
- the use of talent in innovative ways to increase productivity
- a broader range of perspectives leading to an increased flow of ideas
- the development of next-generation policies and services.

Enhanced reputation

Employing disabled people also enhances an organisation's reputation. This is because New Zealanders recognise and appreciate that the organisation understands and represents the full diversity of the New Zealand population it serves.

A failure to represent this diversity may lead to an organisation being viewed as 'out of touch'.

Legal benefits

Legal compliance is a key aspect of corporate governance and responsible business.

Being inclusive helps organisations to:

- better anticipate the needs of disabled employees and clients
- comply with the legal requirements of the Human Rights Act 1993
- reduce the risk of complaints.

Economic benefits

Employing disabled people will help organisations to manage costs and optimise productivity. This also provides benefits to the wider New Zealand economy.

Employing disabled people helps an organisation to:

- improve productivity through innovative and effective ways of doing business
- minimise hiring costs by accessing untapped talent
- increase retention – particularly because studies have shown that disabled people are loyal employees with higher retention rates[5]
- reduce induction and training costs.

Benefits to the New Zealand economy include:

- disabled people contributing to the economy through taxes
- ensuring greater economic equality.

Social benefits

Including disabled people in the workplace benefits New Zealand society by:

- lowering the tax burden on businesses
- improving New Zealand's economic productivity, competitiveness and growth
- ensuring greater social equality
- providing opportunities for disabled people to contribute significantly to the economy as employees, entrepreneurs and consumers.

Ethical benefits

Disabled people are no longer isolated or seen as 'special'. They are an important part of the diversity of society. By employing more disabled people, the State Sector can:

- take an ethical stance that reflects society's changing values
- help improve the lives of disabled people
- tackle discrimination – disabled people should not have to accept inequitable and unfulfilling opportunities in the workplace
- create a culture of inclusion.

Professional benefits for managers

Disability directly affects colleagues at work and in their personal lives. Taking a leadership position on disability:

- helps to develop technical skills in change management, people management, job design, accessibility and useability
- helps managers recognise and enable human potential
- builds flexible management skills
- enables managers to make reasonable accommodations that allow disabled employees to contribute.

➡ Additional resources: why employing disabled people makes good business sense:

The price of exclusion: The economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work

A report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which provides an international perspective on why employing disabled people is a smart business decision.

ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/working-papers/WCMS_119305/lang--en/index.html

EmployAbility

A resource guide on disability for employers in Asia and the Pacific.

ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_BK_PB_98_EN/lang--en/index.html

State of the Nation report: Retaining and developing employees with disabilities

A report from the United Kingdom's Business Disability Forum which includes information about the business benefits of employing and retaining disabled staff.

businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/media-centre/news/state-of-the-nation-report-retaining-and-developing-employees-with-disabilities/

Diversity Works NZ

Top tips for creating a work environment that's inclusive of people of all abilities.

diversityworksnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/0516-Top-tips-disability.pdf

Structuring a business case for disability employment

Advice from the Australian Public Service Commission about designing a business case to go beyond ethical arguments to business benefits for employing and retaining people with disability.

apsc.gov.au/managing-in-the-aps/disability/as-one/business-case

Building the Business Case

Access and inclusion is good for business. This short video illustrates the case for inclusion of people with disability in Australia. Over four million people in Australia have some form of disability, so it makes good business sense to make recruitment, products, services, and premises accessible to everyone.

https://www.and.org.au/pages/videos.html

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq_MhpZ31yA

Social Development Network guide for business on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and including them in society, as managers, employees, suppliers and consumers is a triple win: a win for persons with disabilities, a win for business, and a win for the society in general.

http://unsdn.org/2017/09/08/guide-for-business-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/

3 The Employment Cycle – advice for management and human resources teams

3 The Employment Cycle – advice for management and human resources teams

Recruitment

Induction

Development

Performance Management

Retention
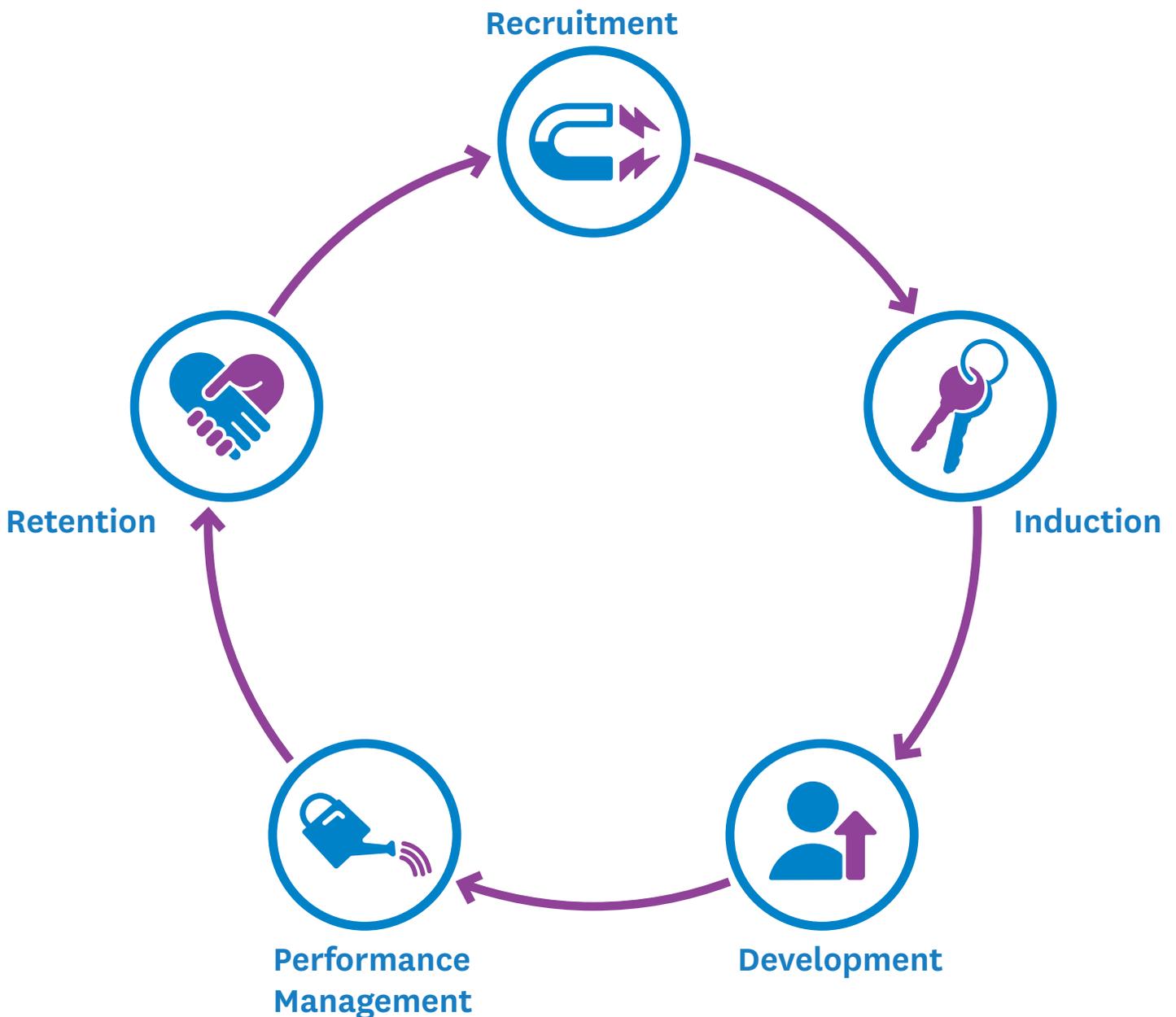
Confidently recruit and maximise the potential of disabled employees.

This section of the Toolkit provides advice to management and human resources teams to ensure that they can confidently recruit and maximise the potential of disabled employees throughout the employment cycle.

This can involve:

- having an equitable and accessible recruitment process where disabled people are encouraged to apply

- having job specifications that focus on the core requirements of the role and do not specify the methods the candidate should use to fulfil these

- providing disabled employees with the same opportunities for training and development as everyone else

- knowing if employees need reasonable accommodations

- being flexible and responsive to the disabled candidate or employee's needs; simple things like having a buddy for new employees or allowing an interviewee more time to answer a question can make a huge difference

- not making assumptions about what a person can do.

For quick answers to a number of commonly asked recruitment questions, human resources teams should see **Recruitment FAQs.**

odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/making-it-easier-to-employ-disabled-people/

3.1 Recruitment

The pool of talented disabled people is large, as disabled people make nearly a quarter of New Zealand's working-age population.

Failing to attract disabled candidates for job vacancies means missing out on talented potential employees.

Consider whether any of the following aspects of recruitment might be acting as barriers to the employment of disabled people in your organisation.

Job descriptions and candidate specifications

The first step in any recruitment process is to understand what is required of the job. This information is then translated into a job specification.

Job descriptions and candidate specifications may needlessly exclude or discourage a highly qualified disabled candidate.

To make sure all qualified candidates have the opportunity to highlight their relevant skills and expertise:

- group job criteria into 'essential' and 'desirable' aspects
- rank criteria in order of importance, and consider whether minor tasks could be reassigned to another person
- don't include blanket requirements or exclusions in relation to health or disability
- specify qualifications only where there is a genuine occupational requirement
- focus on objectives rather than methods.

This approach allows both disabled and non-disabled applicants to discuss how they can meet the requirements of the job.

A small wording change could result in a wider pool of applicants. For example:

- Instead of specifying a 'minimum typing speed', the job criteria could include 'produce quality documents using a word-processing program'.

- A job is advertised which entails visiting older people in the local area. Instead of specifying that a full driver's licence is required, consider other ways of achieving the objective (such as using the bus).

- A receptionist's job description could include making coffee as an additional task rather than an essential one.

Job descriptions and candidate specifications should be reviewed each time they are used to make sure they are still relevant. This is critical in the rapidly changing global environment in which we live.

Advertising jobs

All job advertisements should be as inclusive as possible to ensure that disabled candidates are not excluded. The majority of disabled people prefer to apply for jobs through mainstream application routes. Employers should also encourage disabled applicants by specifically inviting them to apply. An example of such text could be:

> XYZ is committed to equal opportunity in all our employment policies and procedures. All staff – regardless of gender, race, martial status, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or ethical beliefs, political opinion or union affiliation – have access to equal employment opportunities, particularly recruitment, training and career performance management and conditions of employment.

Application form

When developing an application form, make sure that the information being gathered determines whether the person can perform the job essentials and that the application form is available in alternative formats.

Online recruitment

To ensure that your online advertisements and recruitment websites are accessible to disabled people:

- frequently test websites for user accessibility

- include html email in online communications

- create job alerts or job talent pools for unsuccessful candidates
- make sure people who have vision impairments can access the site using screen reading software
- create text labels for images and non-text items
- advertisements should ideally include welcoming messages and demonstrate a commitment to employing disabled people. Some examples include: "We welcome enquiries from everyone and value diversity in the workforce" and "We are willing to consider flexible working arrangements"
- have flexible automated scanning.

When candidates submit online applications, make sure that sorting software, such as spell-checkers, does not discriminate against disabled people.

If you find that your online recruitment process has accessibility problems, ensure that there is an easy alternative for potential employees to apply for positions whilst you address these problems.

Recruitment agencies

It is the employer's responsibility to check that the recruitment agency they use does not discriminate against disabled candidates.

Check the following aspects with the recruitment agency:

- Have you told your recruitment agency that you want to recruit disabled people?
- What disability responsiveness training have the agency's staff undertaken?
- What are their disability and equal opportunity policies?
- Are they aware of the hiring organisation's policies, and are they compatible?
- How have they ensured that the mechanisms they use to advertise positions are accessible?
- How accessible are their premises?
- Do they understand and practise reasonable accommodation?
- Will the agency ensure that a disabled candidate who meets the core requirements will be granted an interview?

⮕ Selection

At each stage of the selection process, it is important to ensure that no barriers are placed in the way of qualified disabled candidates.

The selection process includes:

- deciding on a shortlist
- arranging interviews
- interviewing candidates
- deciding on a preferred candidate
- giving feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

One simple thing that can help to increase the number of disabled people employed in your organisation is to include all disabled candidates who meet the core requirements for the job on the shortlist.

Interviewing disabled candidates

When arranging interviews, ask all interviewees whether they have any specific requirements. These could include:

- a wheelchair-accessible interview room
- a New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreter
- longer time to answer questions
- a hearing loop.

If an applicant identifies they have a disability:

- contact them as soon as possible to make sure any accessibility requirements are met
- brief the receptionist and interviewers on the candidate's specific requirements.

When interviewing disabled candidates, only ask questions that would be asked of a non-disabled person. For example, most employers would ask "What support would you need to be effective in the role?" The Australian Network on Disability have a helpful factsheet about interviewing disabled people.

https://www.and.org.au/pages/interviewing-people-with-disability.html

Adjustments to tests

When aptitude and other tests are included in the selection process, ensure that any assessments are in an accessible format and relate to the requirements of the job.

Adjustments to tests may be reasonable, but this depends on how closely the test is related to the job and what reasonable accommodations you might have to make if the applicant was given the job.

Some examples of reasonable adjustments to tests are:

- allowing extra time to complete a test
- allowing an oral test where a candidate has difficulty with manual dexterity
- using technology for blind people
- letting a reader or scribe help with reading or writing during a test.

Feedback

Whenever possible, employers should give feedback to unsuccessful applicants. This is particularly important where there have been discussions about reasonable accommodation.

It must be made clear to disabled applicants that the decision has been based on their level of skill or experience, not on issues related to their disability.

Additional information

Employment NZ has some helpful information on hiring and recruitment.

https://www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/employment-for-disabled-people/

Summer Internships

https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/information-and-support/summer-internships.html

A guide to help you with hiring disabled people for summer internship roles.

Interviewing Disabled People

https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/information-and-support/interviewing-disabled-people.html

A guide to help employers prepare for interviews with disabled people.

3.2 Induction

A quality induction is important for all employees to be successful. Everything will be unfamiliar to new employees and unexpected issues could arise. Assigning another staff member to support a new employee for a specified time helps build confidence and make their entry into the new role more successful. This is good practice for inducting both disabled and non-disabled employees.

Any reasonable accommodation required would ideally be identified before the person started working, including making sure the environment was accessible.

If unexpected issues concerning accessibility or reasonable accommodation arise, discuss and resolve them as soon as possible, to enable all employees to be successful.

The State Services has an online module that introduces people to working in the State sector.

https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/induction-state-services/

3.3 Development

To make the most of people's talents, we develop our high performers, including disabled people.

It is easy to make courses and training fully inclusive. Usually it does not take much to plan courses and training for disabled people:

- Ensure venues are accessible and training material is appropriately presented – the Accessible Meetings and Events checklist can assist.

  https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/information-and-support/accessible-meetings-and-events.html

- Offer open and flexible learning as an alternative to venue-based learning.

- Be flexible about timetables, especially breaks.

- Provide participant with written materials prior to the training so they can familiarise themselves with the content.

- Offer precursor training.

- Check that the trainers are aware of the needs of disabled people.

- Vary the learning methods, as different people learn in different ways.

- Use a mentor or buddy system.

3.4 Performance mangement

Job performance for disabled employees is the same as for all employees – some meet expectations, some exceed and others don't meet expectations.

Managing the performance of disabled employees will therefore use the same policies and processes.

However, it is important that a disabled employee:

- is appropriately supported to participate in the performance management process

- has the right workplace adjustments (reasonable accommodations) in place.

Reasonable accommodation could include:

- flexibility around breaks and timeframes

- assign extra time for meetings

- use of NZSL interpreters

- additional training or coaching

- reallocating work that is not a core requirement.

Core requirements are activities and tasks that are:

- essential

- cannot be changed or allocated

- lead to significant consequences when not performed.

Moving work that is not a core requirement could be a reasonable accommodation. Remember that activities and tasks do not need to be undertaken exactly the same way – it is the results that matter.

If you identify difficulties that result from an impairment, whenever possible discuss these separately from any discussion of performance issues.
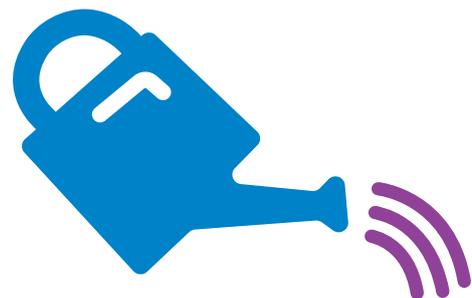
3.5 Retention

Being proactive about retaining disabled staff has a number of benefits for your organisation.

For example:

- **Adaptability:** by learning to manage their disability or health issues, disabled people have learned problem solving skills that are readily applicable to any modern workplace.

- **Increased staff morale:** By treating all employees fairly, including disabled people, you demonstrate that you are a good employer.

- **Lower costs:** improving retention through providing reasonable accommodation always costs less than having to recruit and train a new employee. It also increases the number of employees returning to work after a short- or long-term absence and reduces the costs associated with absences in the workplace.

- **Public reputation:** Being recognised as a good employer enhances your reputation with the New Zealand public.

Feeling valued is important to all employees. Ensuring that training and career development opportunities exist is one way to demonstrate how you value all employees, including disabled employees.

Likewise, with the right help, people experiencing mental health problems can continue in their role. This may involve agreeing to a 'return to work' plan that gradually increases the hours a team member works after being off work. It may also require a little more flexibility in terms of hours worked or support offered to them.

Supporting the retention of disabled staff can involve:

- encouraging and supporting an early return to work

- developing flexible working conditions

- providing disability responsiveness training for managers and immediate colleagues

- ensuring managers are aware of their obligations to provide reasonable accommodation

- providing specific information to colleagues and managers, with the agreement of the disabled employee, where reasonable accommodation requires the co-operation of others

- showing pride in the achievements of disabled staff, for example by:

  - including photos of disabled people on the organisation's website

  - referring them to training and career development opportunities

  - publicising success stories.

Specific disability organisations, can help employers understand their employee's situation better, and help develop their work as a better 'fit' for their evolving abilities.

➔ Additional resource

JobAccess

The employer section of JobAccess has information to support employers with employing people with a disability.

www.jobaccess.gov.au/

Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin

Alzheimer's is often seen as an older person's disease but we know it can impact younger people. The attached link provides some advice and information to help a person continue to work for you.

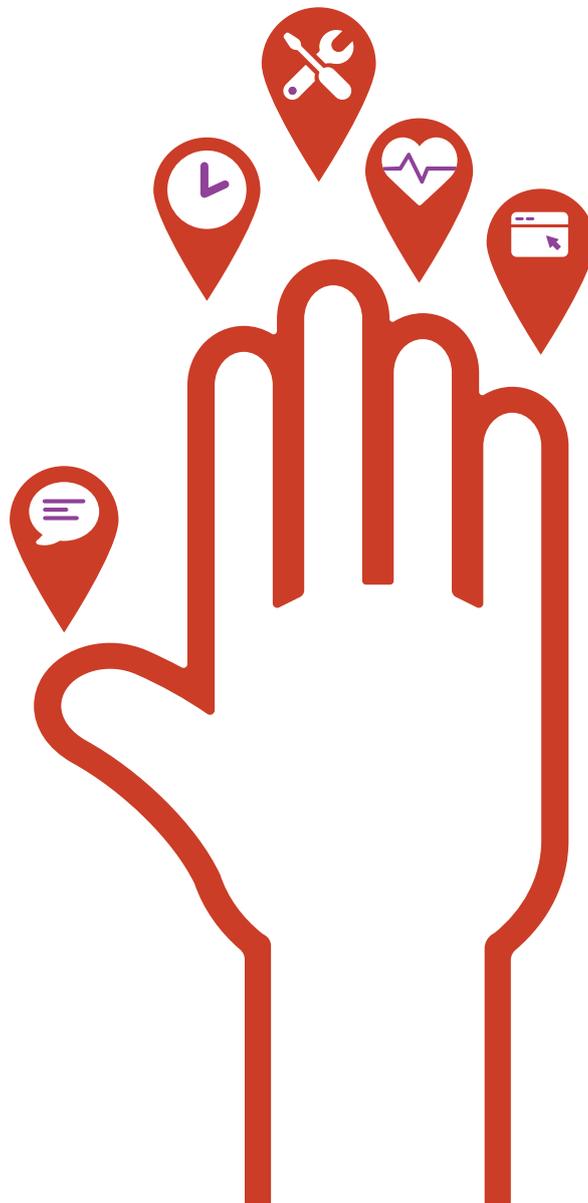http://www.alzwisc.org/In%20the%20workplace.html

4 Advice for managers

4 Advice for managers

All employers benefit when their organisation invests in more skilled and confident managers through guidance and training. Managers often set the tone for the team and drive team culture.

An inclusive workplace is one in which:

- policies are in place to ensure everyone is included, including disabled people
- managers recognise the importance of a diverse workplace that includes disabled people
- managers and staff understand what disabled people can do
- managers develop all their staff, including disabled employees, to their full potential
- managers and staff address barriers to employment, retention or promotion for all.

Managers who take a leadership position on disability play a crucial role in creating an inclusive workplace for disabled employees, and can help transform the management style within an organisation.

Flexible management allows disabled employees to contribute fully to their organisation. Many of the adjustments made for disabled people are also needed by other employees, so adopting more flexible employment practices can help all employees.

Learning how to effectively manage disabled people will also have professional benefits for managers, such as having an increased ability to recognise and enable human potential (see section 2, professional benefits for managers).

https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/lead-toolkit/employing-disabled-people-committed-leadership.html

This section includes advice for direct managers about:

- reasonable accommodation
- disability responsiveness training
- useful tools to effectively work with disabled employees (including those with mental health issues)
- some health and safety and technology tips.

4.1 Reasonable accommodation

The creation of an environment in which employees' specific needs are met.

The term 'reasonable accommodation' describes the creation of an environment in which employees' specific needs are met, allowing equal opportunity and enabling all employees to do their jobs as well as possible.

Employers already provide reasonable accommodation for many employees, including:

- parents caring for young children or other relatives
- people with religious or ethical beliefs
- disabled people.

Reasonable accommodation for disabled people could include:

- making physical adjustments, such as ensuring access to a building
- modifying the way a job is done, for example by allocating aspects of the job to another employee
- allowing flexible working hours
- giving instructions in writing as well as verbally
- showing people how to do a task.

Most reasonable accommodations cost very little or nothing.

Successful managers will get the best out of all their employees, including disabled employees, if they identify what will assist employees to do the best job possible. A reasonable accommodation may be a part of that. Most accommodations are low or no cost – for example flexible hours, instructions in writing as well as verbally and showing people how do a task.

What is considered reasonable?

The Human Rights Act obliges all employers to take reasonable measures to meet employees' needs. Factors to take into account when considering what is reasonable include:

- how effective the adjustment is in assisting the disabled employee to perform their job
- whether it is practical to make the adjustment
- the financial or other costs of the adjustment
- the extent of the organisation's resources
- how much disruption, if any, will be caused to the organisation or other people
- the size of the organisation and the nature of its business.

Providing reasonable accommodation for disabled employees

All employers should develop written policies on accommodations and flexible work practices. Written policies:

- ensure consistent decision-making
- help all staff know what the guidelines are and how to request an accommodation
- help to document your organisation's efforts to provide accommodations.

Don't make assumptions about what a disabled person needs. The following process will help with identifying disabled employees' specific needs:

The starting point for any discussion about reasonable accommodation should be the working conditions provided for all employees.

Before the disabled employee starts work, ask them what accommodations they would find useful. A variety of organisations can provide expert advice.

Where costs are involved, extra support may be available (for example, through a Workplace Modification Grant or the Job Support Fund).

https://supportfunds.co.nz/

Provide the required accommodations and check with the employee that the accommodations are meeting their needs.

Talk with the employee regularly to check whether the accommodations are still meeting their needs. This is especially important if the employee's needs change or if there are changes to the workplace or the job.

When to use Support Funds for reasonable accommodation

Workbridge is the provider contracted to administer Job Support. Employees must apply to Workbridge for Job Support.

https://supportfunds.co.nz/

Workbridge administer and pay the Job Support Funds on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development. There are two types:

- **Job Support** – provides financial assistance for people with a health condition or a disability so they can gain or retain open employment by removing barriers incurred because of a disability.

  Job Support grants and subsidies cover additional costs incurred because the person is disabled or has ill health while they participate in employment.

- **Training Support** – provides financial assistance for disabled people or people with ill health so they can gain or retain open employment through participation in training and other activities.

  Training Support grants cover additional costs incurred because the person is disabled or has ill health while they participate in training, work experience, education or capacity assessments.

  Training must be consistent with realistic and reasonable outcomes for the individual. Training Support will only be granted if the applicant is considered capable of undertaking the training. A clear link between the training opportunity and the employment goal must be established.

Any organisation that makes necessary accommodations for its employees will quickly become an employer of choice for disabled people.

Any organisation that makes necessary accommodations for its employees will quickly become an employer of choice for disabled people. Many of these accommodations can be provided by employers at a very limited cost.

Where support or modified basic equipment is provided to all employees this will be funded by the employer. Where the support covers specialised equipment, such as a CCTV reader or NZSL interpreters is required, talk to your employee about seeking funding from ACC or Support Funds administered by Workbridge. If the employee receives specialised equipment through Support Funds, they own the equipment and can take it with them should they move jobs.

⇒ Additional information

Information on reasonable accommodation for both the employer and employee, including recommendations for employees with a mental health issue:

https://www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/employment-for-disabled-people/reasonable-accommodation-measures/

https://workbridge.co.nz/employers/employing-disabled-people/making-reasonable-accomodations/

https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/information-and-support/reasonable-accommodation.html

https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/information-and-support/practical-steps-for-managers.html

4.2 Useful tools to assist managers with creating an inclusive workplace

Managers play an essential role in creating an inclusive environment.

A fully inclusive environment ensures that both managers and their staff treat disabled employees fairly, as disabled employees' colleagues also need to feel comfortable and confident working with them.

Disability responsiveness training

In building an inclusive workplace, providing disability responsiveness training is an important first step. It can help staff feel more comfortable with disabled colleagues. It helps them understand their own values and how they affect decisions to employ disabled people. The following resources will help create a disability responsive workplace.

Disability responsiveness trainer
Disability Responsiveness New Zealand
email disabilityresponsiveness@gmail.com

www.drnz.co.nz

An example of disability responsiveness training
odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/disability-responsiveness-training/

Disability etiquette
https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/
work-programmes/accessibility/quick-reference-guides/
disability-etiquette.html

Working with interpreters

http://odi.govt.nz/new-zealand-sign-language-nzsl/nzsl-tools-and-resources/publications/

Working with disabled employees

Manager's Guide – A best practice approach to working with disabled employees

This is a guide about how to treat disabled staff fairly and give them the same opportunities as their non-disabled colleagues. The guide was developed by Workbridge with the UK Employers' Forum on Disability. Request from Workbridge:

https://workbridge.co.nz/employers/employing-disabled-people/successful-management/
phone: 04 913 6422.

Works For Me

The Works For Me video shows how employing someone with a disability can have a positive impact on the culture of a business. It was produced by the Employers' Disability Network for employers, chambers of commerce and employment groups.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxgEON6Uoio&feature=youtu.be

The win-win of disability inclusion

Explore the International Labour Organization's InfoStory to find out why employing people with disabilities makes good business sense.

https://www.ilo.org/infostories/stories/employment/the-win-win-of-disability-inclusion

https://www.youtube.com/user/EFDVideos

Disability Podcasts and Employment

Business Disability Forum (UK) has some really interesting podcasts.

https://player.fm/series/business-disability-forum

⤇ Working with employees who have mental health issues

The following resources can help build managers' confidence in working with staff who have mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety.

Mindful Employer publications

Tools and resources to help managers support employees who are experiencing mental health issues, including:

- Mindful employers – Line Managers' Resource
- Making work work
- Feeling stressed: keeping well.

https://www.dpt.nhs.uk/mindful-employer

Time to change

Advice about talking to people who have mental health issues:

https://www.time-to-change.org.uk

⤇ Mental Health in the Workplace – Employee

http://mentalhealth.intuto.com/public/course/784686/#sco=Identifier784688

Provides employees with basic information about mental health problems in the workplace, and their rights and responsibilities.

⤇ Mental Health in the Workplace – Manager

http://mentalhealth.intuto.com/public/course/786014/#sco=Identifier786016

Provides a learning resource for managers to help them deal positively with mental health issues that arise in the workplace.

⤇ Mental Health in the Workplace – Organisation's Toolkit

http://mentalhealth.intuto.com/public/course/793999/#sco=Identifier794001

Provides information and resources for creating a positive and inclusive workplace for all workers, including those who have mental health problems.

Practical guide for managers

https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/2010-workers-mental-illness-practical-guide-managers

Provides information on how to confidently work with staff who have mental health issues.

Te Reo Hāpai - The Language of Enrichment

Updating and creating Māori language used in the mental health, addiction and disability sectors.

https://www.tepou.co.nz/resources/te-reo-hapai---the-language-of-enrichment/843

Line managers guide to working with employees with mental health issues

A third of line managers have admitted they would struggle to identify mental health issues and a similar percentage wouldn't know what to do if a team member had a mental health problem.

Bupa has launched a free guide online for line managers. It is designed to support line managers – within any size of business – with their approach to mental health in the workplace.

https://www.bupa.co.uk/~/media/Images/HealthManagement/workplace-mental-health/manager-mental-health-support-guide.pdf

Peoples Mental Health Report

A crowdfunded, crowdsourced story-based report, with stories of what really goes on, and goes wrong, in mental health services.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HZ7tC7JWCq1oafloOaF5cL4pbmanx5Mj/view

4.3 Health and wellbeing

Managers need to look after the mental and physical well-being of all staff, including disabled employees. Creating a workplace where staff feel supported and are healthy can help to improve productivity and retention.

➡ Work-related stress – together we can tackle it

Tips for more effective management of work-related stress:

hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm

➡ Case study

British Telecom developed a three-tiered mental health framework to improve the health, safety and well-being of their staff:

- **Level one** – promote employee well-being and prevent mental distress, for example through tips on the intranet and management training around softer skills.

- **Level two** – identify distress and intervene early on to prevent it from escalating, through an online stress risk assessment for employees and companion training for line managers.

- **Level three** – support and treatments for people experiencing mental health problems. Employees are encouraged to work with their line manager to produce an 'advance directive' to identify early warning signs and establish a plan of action for if they become distressed.

As part of this framework, British Telecom have also recently launched a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy service for staff experiencing mild-to-moderate mental health problems
that do not need to be diagnosed by a doctor. Around 200 employees have used this service so far, and satisfaction rates have been very high.

http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/casestudies/btgroup.htm

Working Well

mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/27/working-well

As an employer or manager, you know it's your people who provide the greatest potential for success in your business. Maintaining optimal mental health at work is too important to be left to chance: employees and employers will benefit from an active approach towards mental health in the workplace.

Mental health – five ways to wellbeing

www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/

The Mental Health Foundation has resources available on five ways to wellbeing:

- give
- be active
- keep learning
- connect
- take notice.

Working with Anxiety

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vknh8grC9qc

A YouTube video that explores how anxiety affects the ability to work and carry out other day to day activities, and highlights key ways to aid recovery.

Succeeding in job interviews by New Zealand Immigration

https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/work-in-nz/finding-work/job-interviews

Advice for people going into an interview.

4.4 Technology tips

Advances in technology have made it possible for many disabled people to participate in the workplace. The right technology can be an enabler while the wrong technology can create barriers.

The right technology can be an enabler while the wrong technology can create barriers. Modern computer hardware and software can be adjusted to meet the needs of many disabled employees. For example, Microsoft Windows has 'Ease of Access' tools which include several options for screen magnification and contrast, adjustments to mouse and keyboard, screen reading, speech recognition and visual alternatives to sounds. Modern telephones are also generally compatible with hearing aids and will have adjustments for volume and screen brightness.

Employees may need assistance to set up these options correctly.

A number of employees will need more specialist options.

⟫ Specialist options:

- computer monitor
- keyboard or mouse
- headset with hearing aid connection
- screen magnification (higher than 16x)
- screen reading software
- electronic magnifiers (CCTV readers)
- speech recognition software
- access video remote sign language interpreters
- Braille printer.

It's best to get specialist advice to select the right options for a particular employee. Advice is generally available from the relevant specialist service providers.

Funding may be available for high-cost IT modifications (see Support Funds earlier in this section).

https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/lead-programme-work/lead-toolkit/advice-for-managers.html#SupportFunds

It's also best to work with your IT department early in the discussions to ensure that the identified solutions will work within the particular environment.

It often takes time to implement alternate technology as IT needs to learn about the tool(s) and maintain security of their network. In addition, they may need to work outside the normal agency policies. Ideally, an IT department should have a single point of contact for implementing IT solutions for disabled employees.

5 Conclusion

5 Conclusion

Disabled people are a fabulous untapped talent pool of loyal and committed employees.

Employment is important for everyone. Disabled people are a fabulous untapped talent pool of loyal and committed employees. Disabled people bring a perspective that can help transform an organisation's culture, client relations and performance for the better.

The employer is in a unique position to take a leadership role in employing disabled people and take advantage of their skills.

By using this Toolkit you will be able to champion the creation of more inclusive workplaces for disabled New Zealanders.

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Watch the *Taking the Lead* video for real-life stories of employing disabled people. Ask for the DVD, or view it online at www.msd.govt.nz/lead

New Zealand Government

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA