

**Promoting Accessible Social Dialogue and Innovative
Training Practices:
Towards an Information Society for All**

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**Employers' Guide to
Diversity
Management.
People with Disabilities in
Mainstream Workplaces**

Abstract:

This *Employers' Guide* is intended as a comprehensive resource for Human Resource Management (HRM) professionals and other business managers working in the area of recruitment and people management. It deals with equality policy development, disability awareness and equitable hiring and employing policy. Strategies are proposed for developing inclusive recruitment and selection procedures, with practical guidance provided on ensuring effectiveness of recruitment and selection tools in assessing candidates with disabilities.

The Guide is the "course text-book" for the e-Learning course "Disability for Managers", which is offered free of charge on the Social Dialogue Vortal at www.socialdialogue.net

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1 Introduction

Over the last few years the number of people with disabilities seeking employment in a mainstream setting has increased significantly. This development presents a significant opportunity for employers who have effective procedures in place with regard to recruiting and employing people in a non-discriminatory, inclusive way.

This guide has been produced by the 'SDV-NetJob' European Project which has been 75% funded by the European Communities, European Social Fund, Article 6 Innovative Measures: "Adaptation to the New Economy Within the Framework of Social Dialogue". The SDV-NetJob European Project, pioneered in Denmark, Greece and Ireland, seeks to promote accessible social dialogue and innovative training practices - in working towards the creation of an Information Society for all.

The guide is intended as a comprehensive resource for Human Resource Management (HRM) professionals and other business managers working in the area of recruitment and people management. It deals with equality policy development, disability awareness and equitable hiring and employing policy. Strategies are proposed for developing inclusive recruitment and selection procedures, with practical guidance provided on ensuring effectiveness of recruitment and selection tools in assessing candidates with disabilities.

Most people with disabilities are born able-bodied and a large proportion of people who become disabled do so because of illness or injury acquired during their working lives. Good practice in relation to reintegration of people who have suffered health problems is therefore a matter of key importance to diversity management and to facilitating the employment of people with disabilities in mainstream workplaces.

Reintegration is dealt with in Chapter 11 and is guided by protocols produced by *The Return Project*. This project was part funded by the European Commission, 'Improving Human Potential' programme and involved wide-ranging studies and consultations across 6 countries.

2 Why Employ People With Disabilities?

Attracting and retaining qualified staff is one of the biggest challenges facing employers today. When considering why your organisation should employ people with disabilities it is worth noting that in addition to having relevant qualifications, people with disabilities have generally overcome significant barriers to get to where they are today, and they are often highly motivated, flexible and creative.

Organisations who employ people with disabilities identify such positive qualities. Evaluation of employer's experiences reveals other business benefits from employing people with disabilities. These include, improved moral and commitment amongst all staff and also enhanced customer relations. Factors such as these coupled with the obligation of employers to comply with developing equality legislation makes failure to attract qualified people with disabilities an unnecessary waste of resources.

While more and more organisations are recognising the benefits of employing people with disabilities there are still regular questions raised by many employers including:

- Will the person have the ability to do the job?
- Will our insurance liabilities increase?
- Will there be health and safety implications?
- Will this be an otherwise expensive matter?

Concerns like the above continue to be significant barriers to the recruitment of people with disabilities and we will now look at the various issues raised.

2.1. Ability To Do The Job

In the majority of cases an employers first concern is, can the candidate can do the job, and contribute to the success of the organisation? People with disabilities, being aware of employer concerns, are often very keen to prove themselves as productive, reliable and valuable employees.

Advances in technology have significantly altered the type of job accessible to people with disabilities. In addition, simple adjustments and adaptations to the job and the job environment can create the necessary conditions for people with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities and to become valued employees.

Organisations who have employed people with disabilities consistently report positive outcomes and organisational benefits:

- Studies find that employees with disabilities have attendance, punctuality and productivity levels equal to, if not better than their able-bodied peers.
- Staff morale and commitment to the organisation are also found to rise, due in part perhaps, to the organisation's visible treatment of all people respectfully.
- Benefits are also noticed on the customer relationship level with customers responding and acting favourably towards organisations that are positive towards disability and reflect the diversity of the community within their workforce.
- Increased commitment from customers with disabilities is also notable.

2.2. Risks and Costs of Insurance

The perceived high costs of providing adequate insurance can act as a major disincentive to employing people with disabilities. In reality however insurers are generally prepared to provide cover for people with disabilities at no additional premium. While health and safety of existing and new staff must always be a priority too, there is little difficulty in obtaining insurance at normal rates once a safe working environment is provided.

Empirical evidence does not support the perception that people with disabilities present a safety risk in employment. On the contrary, a number of studies have found that people with disabilities have better safety records than able-bodied workplace peers. For instance, the Dupont Chemical Company conducted a survey which found 96% of their staff with disabilities, including managers and technicians had a better than average safety record. A survey by The British Epilepsy Association showed similar results.

In some instances it may be necessary to take specific action to ensure people with disabilities are safe at work. Such actions may include:

- Flashing lights and/or a vibrating pager to alert a deaf person to an emergency.
- Provision of an evacuation chair to assist an employee with a mobility impairment.
- Emphasis on safety when choosing and installing machines.
- Inclusion of relevant disability information in first aid training.
- Designation of personnel to assist evacuation of any mobility impaired employee.

All employers are obliged under health and safety regulation to provide a safe working environment for employees and visitors. An employer who takes seriously these obligations and outlines them in the organisations safety statement provides a workplace safe for all employees and visitors, including people with disabilities.

2.3. Cost of Adaptations

The perceived high costs of accommodating people with disabilities remains a significant barrier to their employment. While some adaptations can be expensive, most adaptations and other accommodations are inexpensive and the employer usually has access to funding to subsidise these. In addition, accommodating people with disabilities may have wider business benefits such as the benefit to non-disabled employees and customers with disabilities that facilities such as lifts provide.

In practice, the majority of people with disabilities do not however require any special treatment or facilities in order to attend work. 85% of over 2000 people with disabilities of working age surveyed in a recent UK study had no requirement for adaptations to get into or to use building facilities; 11% said they needed some form of special equipment, aids or adaptations to work. 12% said they needed flexible working arrangements. And where adaptations are required, costs are usually modest. Research conducted by Sears Roebuck in the USA found that 68% of adjustments made to accommodate employees with disabilities were made at no extra cost to the company. 23% were made at less than \$1000 and only 3% cost more than \$1000.

3 Developing an Equitable Policy Framework

Traditionally people with disabilities have often been discriminated against and have not had access to education and employment in the same way as their peers. People with a disability were considered 'ill' and 'unable to work'. Special training was provided in special schools or training centres which were considered rehabilitative. Similarly, images of people with disabilities were of objects of charity, or outstanding individuals overcoming seemingly insurmountable difficulties.

Society is however now recognising the contribution that people with disabilities can and do make to the political, economic and social life of society and the role society plays, in creating and sustaining disability. In understanding this change it is useful to consider the move within social thinking from a 'medical model' approach to a 'social model' of disability:

The medical model defines disability in clinical terms and views it as a deficit of the individual. In contrast the social model of disability recognises that disability arises in the restrictions imposed on people with disabilities in their daily lives. The experience of disability is created in the interactions by people with impairments in a world designed for non-impaired living.

3.1 Identifying Barriers

Providing equal opportunities in all aspects of society requires the identification and removal of barriers facing people with disabilities. In terms of access to employment, recruitment and employment procedures, the key barriers facing people with disabilities can be classified as either environmental or attitudinal barriers.

3.1.1 Environment Barriers

This is a broad term incorporating the communication difficulties, physical access and procedural difficulties facing people with disabilities in employment. Such barriers will impede people with disabilities when competing with other candidates and may include:

- Employment advertisements inaccessible to people with various disabilities.
- Inaccessible interview facilities.
- Inappropriate psychometric tests.
- Inaccessible recruitment fairs, recruitment companies and other external venues.
- Lack of sign language interpreter at interviews.

3.1.2 Attitudinal Barriers

In this context these refer to the potential for bias (conscious or unconscious) in the decision making process. Candidates for a job with disabilities repeatedly report that negative and misinformed attitudes act as the most significant barriers to employment. Across Europe people with disabilities have traditionally been educated in isolation from their peers, and a lack of awareness and stereotyping can be prevalent. For example, assume that a person with a history of mental illness or physiological problems is violent, or that a blind person cannot work with computers. Whether intentional or due to lack of information, such assumptions can compromise the ability to get a job and/or progress within employment.

3.2 Areas For Action

In addressing the barriers facing people with disabilities and 'disability proofing' recruitment and selection practices, changes must occur at policy, structural and procedural level to ensure that people with disabilities are given access to positions they are suited to and can then after progress within them. Outlined below are the various key policy areas that are central to creating an inclusive recruitment and employment process. The key areas for action include the following:

- Written equal opportunity policy addressing disability and the challenges within.
- Reasonable accommodation.
- Objectivity and written procedures with regard to recruitment and selection.
- Disability awareness training.
- Positive action.
- Work placements for students and graduates with disabilities.

3.2.1 *Written Equal Opportunities Policy*

Good practice and recruitment and selection procedures should be implemented within the context of a written equal opportunities policy. This should explicitly include the issues related to people with disabilities. Development of a written policy and an accompanying action plan provides the framework for action and increases the likelihood of achieving equality objectives. An equal opportunities policy provides a clear statement of an organisations commitment to provide equality in the work place. The objective of the policy should be to remove barriers to equality for candidates with disabilities in all relevant areas including recruitment and access to employment, terms of conditions of employment, training and promotion and career development, reward systems and the accommodation of employees who acquired disabilities while in employment.

Key factors influencing the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy include:

- Commitment and support of top management to ensure necessary resources.
- Development of a plan that outlines how policy will be translated into practice.
- Wide spread consultation with all staff including employees with disabilities.
- Written statement of policy.
- Wide spread internal and external communication of the policy.
- Development of appropriate mechanisms to monitor policy.

3.2.2 *Reasonable Accommodation*

Many organisations have introduced measures of flexibility into work practices and terms and conditions to facilitate the changing profile of their workforce. Flexibility will be a vital requirement for some people with disabilities. Overall, where the suitability of a person with a disability is in question, employers should consider any measure of flexibility that might reasonably be employed to facilitate that person.

Good employment practice recognises the requirement for flexibility and acknowledges that some people with disabilities require accommodations or 'special treatment and facilities' to access work. The principle of reasonable accommodation therefore commits an employer to provide, within reason, the accommodation required in recruitment selection and then employment to ensure that a person with a disability has equality of opportunity.

Sample accommodations that maybe required for people with disabilities are outlined below. Alternatively the person with a disability will be the expert on what assistance or

accommodation he/she requires to participate in employment. In all cases therefore, advice should be sought from the person as to his/her requirements. Sample accommodations include:

- Application Process – such as provision of an application form in alternative formats such as brail, large print, on tape etc.
- Interview - the provision of facilities such as sign language interpreter, allowing a personal assistant to attend, going off site to meet a candidate with a disability.
- Test – for instance allowing additional time in a test, providing a separate room, provision of a rest period and providing tests in alternative formats such as computer based.
- Pre-employment medical with any medical set up to consider whether a person is fit to undertake the essential aspects of the position or fit to work with the provision of some specified accommodation.
- Terms and conditions of employment that provide flexible working arrangements or job restructuring such as the re-allocation of marginal tasks.

3.2.3 Objectivity and Written Procedures and Guidelines

Assessment of candidates for recruitment purposes is ultimately subjective and prone to individual preferences and bias of the assessor. Good practice in Human Resource management emphasises the importance of objectivity in the recruitment and selection process in order to provide equal opportunity for all groups, including people with disabilities. To ensure fair consideration and treatment of people with disabilities therefore, the development of objective assessment processes which minimise the potential for subjectivity and bias should be a key policy consideration.

Through mechanisms such as structuring interviews so that all candidates are asked the same questions or having a minimum of two personnel involved in interviews, people with disabilities will be less at risk of interviewers subjective judgements regarding disability influencing their decision. In addition employers are more likely to make good selection decisions and to get the most suited person for the job.

Overall a commitment to written procedures and guidelines will assist the goal of objectivity. Providing those involved in screening with written screening guidelines, for example, will assist in ensuring consistency of approach to application forms and Curriculum Vitae. Similarly, during interviews objectivity will be augmented by providing interviewers with a structured assessment sheet, rating scale and examples of positive indicators.

A commitment to written documentation of procedures, policies and guidelines becomes increasingly important in light of the developing employment equality regulations. Ability to produce written documentation to support the validity and objectivity of recruitment and selection procedures will be important.

A key recommendation in developing written documentation is that a reference to the organisation's equal opportunities policy should be incorporated. Wide spread reference to this policy will reinforce both to external recruitment companies and the organisation's own staff, the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities and ensure this message is to the fore when recruiting people and thereafter in managing the employment relationship.

3.2.4 Disability Awareness Training

The relevance and importance of training in supporting a fair and effective recruitment and selection process is well established. Good practice in Human Resource management suggests that general training for personnel involved in recruitment and selection should include:

- Training in objective short listing and screening of applicants.
- Training in effective interviewing skills such as rapport building, effective questioning, controlling and summarising.
- Equal opportunities training to help maintain an awareness of vulnerability to bias and stereotyping and to interpret applicant information in the relevant context.
- Implications of regulations in regard to behaviour during interviews.

Ensuring equality of opportunity for people with disabilities reinforces the relevance of training. The traditional segregation of people with disabilities from mainstream education and employment has created a situation where many people may not have had direct contact with a person with a disability. Raising disability awareness, therefore, through training or instruction, is crucial in addressing attitudinal barriers to employment and raising the profile of people with disabilities as valuable employees.

The specific content of disability awareness training or instruction will depend on the target audience but the following modules will usually be incorporated:

- Understanding disability and how it is socially construed.
- Guidelines on dealing with candidates with various disabilities.
- Guidelines on language and etiquette in reference to disability.
- Guidelines on the role of accommodations (for example assisted technology) and on flexibility in facilitating in the recruitment of candidates with disabilities.
- The social and economic benefits of employing people with disabilities.

Raising disability awareness of staff involved in the recruitment process is a primary consideration. Disability awareness training or instruction however is equally important for all other staff members. Senior management support and backing are vital to the success of any equal opportunities program and to ensure that necessary resources are made available. The provision of disability awareness training to all personnel is likely to engender positive attitudes on their part.

Similarly, the provision of disability awareness training to front line staff such as reception personnel who may inadvertently convey a wrong image will increase the likelihood of achieving the objective of equality for people with disabilities.

3.2.5 Positive Action

Positive action directed at people with disability recognises that there are real differences in terms of opportunities in employment for this significantly under represented group.

Positive action differs from positive discrimination in that the latter incorporates direct actions to ensure more favourable treatment for one group over another. Positive action, however, strives to increase the opportunity for participation by members of the un-represented group.

A variety of positive action initiatives can be undertaken to attract and retain people with disabilities. Specific positive action initiatives that might be considered include:

- Targeted recruitment such as advertisements that explicitly welcome applications from people with disabilities.
- A guaranteed interview scheme whereby an organisation commits itself to interview all candidates with disabilities who meet minimum requirements.
- Review of work practices to assess for typical ways work could be redesigned to cater for candidates with disabilities.
- Develop panels of suitably qualified candidates with disabilities for vacancies due.

3.2.6 Work Placements for Students and Graduates with Disabilities

The previous work experience of graduates is often an important consideration for employers in graduate recruitment. Both students and graduates with disabilities, however, may not get the same opportunity to acquire employment experience as their peers due to issues such as physical access, transport difficulties and negative employer attitudes.

Work experience while relevant to all candidates will have particular benefits for people with disabilities during or following their studies. Apart from enabling the acquisition of practical skills and useful CV references, candidates with disabilities will have an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and repeat academic achievements in the work place.

From an employer's perspective, in addition to having a qualified staff member, a student or graduate with a disability participating in work experience will support increased disability awareness among staff. It will also demonstrate the employer's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity. These are very real benefits that are continually expressed by organisations that participate in work experience programs focused on students and graduates with disabilities. Where employers operate placement programs with third level colleges, such structures should be 'disability proofed' to ensure students and graduates with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate. It is also recommended that organisations introduce as part of their overall recruitment strategy a commitment to offering placement opportunities to students or graduates with disabilities.

4 Preparing To Recruit in an Equitable Way

Recruitment begins with an analysis of what the job involves and what type of person is needed. Once identified, these criteria form the basis of the job description and the person specification which are in turn used to drive the entire recruitment process, from advertising the vacancy, through screening and interviewing.

The potential for error in developing specifications such as job descriptions should be recognised. Information collected may be incomplete or biased if collected from an insufficient number of sources. For example, where job descriptions and person specifications are the responsibility of only one individual, the criteria identified can be an inaccurate representation of those actually required for successful performance of the job.

Establishing selection criteria in a way that assists the goal of inclusiveness for people with and without disabilities demands a truly objective analysis. Ideally, a structured and systematic job analysis process should be used. At the very minimum, simple mechanisms such as accessing multiple viewpoints in collecting the job related information, will increase the effectiveness and fairness of this exercise. Such sources may include the jobholder, colleagues, supervisor, staff in other departments and existing records.

4.1 The Job Description

The job description is essentially a broad statement of the purpose, scope, duties and responsibilities attached to a job on the basis of the employment contract. Job descriptions for many years were unwritten and informal and merely discussed at selection interview. More recently, however, organisations generally pay more attention to obtaining accurate, inclusive and up-to-date job descriptions.

A vital requirement to assist equality for people with disabilities is the need to be non-restrictive and as flexible as possible and to identify the jobs essential responsibilities. Many job descriptions that include non-essential or marginal tasks may unnecessarily discriminate against some candidates who may otherwise be well qualified for the job.

Specifying driving responsibilities for example in a job requiring minimal driving duties will serve to exclude blind and other candidates with disabilities. In developing or reviewing job descriptions therefore consideration should be given to distinguishing essential and inessential requirements.

For the purpose of job advertisements avoid specification of non-essential requirements to assist in securing more applications from people with disabilities in addition to widening the general pool of qualified applicants.

4.1.1 Flexible Work Practices

Analysis of the job requirement affords an opportunity to explore atypical or flexible ways in which work can be performed. Flexible work practices such as part time work, flexi-time, job sharing and tele working are becoming increasingly common and will be particularly relevant to some candidates with disabilities. Attention to the context within which the job will be performed and the potential for flexibility when identified and conveyed through advertisements will support applications from additional numbers of people with disabilities.

4.2 The Person Specification

The person specification, or person requirements specify the requisite criteria and will usually include details of the qualifications, knowledge, specific skills and aptitudes, experience and personal attributes needed to do the job effectively.

Good practice suggests the person requirements should be identified using a job description that has considered the potential for flexible and atypical ways in which a role can be performed and which has been developed with the contributions of several people. As with job descriptions, the key requirements in identifying or reviewing a person specification is to be flexible and non-restrictive and to focus on essential criteria. In essence, unnecessary standards for qualification, experience or personal qualities may reduce the number of candidates with disabilities who qualify. They may also increase an employer's vulnerability to claims of unfair discrimination.

For example, some person specifications may state that a person must have a high honours degree simply because the last person to do the job had this standard. A graduate with a disability may have been prevented from achieving this level of attainment because of disability issues or insufficient support from a college or university. An objective and flexible analysis however, may identify a pass honours degree as sufficient for successful performance of the job in question, thereby facilitating a wider pool of candidates.

4.2.1 Competency Framework Approach

In recent years good practice in Human Resource Management has advocated a competency approach in developing a person specification, an approach that is supportive of the goal of equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

The term competency is used to describe all the work related personal attributes, knowledge, experience, skills and values that a person draws on to perform work well. Given that many competencies may have been developed and demonstrated in almost any area of life, not just at work, those candidates with disabilities who have had their educational or experiential career disrupted may be less disadvantaged than if a hard qualification requirement is imposed.

The benefit of using a competency framework is best illustrated as follows:

Those who have developed their skills informally and by those who have a formal qualification in computers can meet a requirement for 'computer literacy' equally.

Similarly, competency in 'organisation skills', as opposed to a requirement for formal administrative work experience, facilitates candidates whose disability prevented the acquisition of actual work experience but who by being active in other areas (for example in voluntary work or college societies), got an 'organisational skills' competency.

It is important to note that while a competency approach will benefit candidates with disabilities, it will also benefit other under-represented groups such as women returning to the work force and older candidates. The benefit of this approach means an organisation can target a wide range of groups in the community and build work teams that reflect the communities they exist within.

4.3 Health or Medical Enquiries

In some jobs there may be justifiable reasons for the exclusion of candidates with certain health or medical conditions. Airline pilots cannot be insulin dependant for instance.

Identification for the person requirements for a position affords an appropriate opportunity to consider any health or medical requirements that arise due to the nature of the position and the job environment. The sourcing of external expertise such as consultation with a doctor may be required in undertaking this exercise.

Collecting information is useful as it can influence the necessity of including questions on health or disability in application forms or the need for a pre-employment medical. As with all other personal requirements however, the imposition and specification of any health or medical conditions must have regard to any flexible or accommodations that could be made to facilitate employment.

4.4 Selecting Assessment Methods

Organisations use a number of selection tools in the assessment process such as application forms, interviews and psychometric tests. Equal opportunity for all candidates requires that the selection of tools reviews the selection requirements and considers what tests are accurate, job relevant, objective and standardised for all candidates.

5 Sourcing Candidates

The point at which advertising is organised in the recruitment process has an important impact on the organisation's hiring process and its image. If an organisation is to be effective in attracting candidates with disabilities it is vital that qualified candidates are confident that their applicant will be considered on merit. Many candidates with disabilities will have experience of rejection in seeking employment and are more likely to apply to organisations that have a recognised positive policy on diversity and/or towards candidates with disabilities.

Experience suggests candidates from under-represented groups are reluctant to apply until they can see evidence that people like them are already successfully employed by the organisation and/or at the very minimum are welcome. The outcome is that organisations need to work hard to make people with disabilities realise they are welcome and will be treated fairly as candidates.

5.1 Encouraging People with Disabilities to Apply

The following strategies are suggested as effective ways of ensuring that people with disabilities and qualified for a vacancy, will be inclined to apply for the role.

5.1.1 Advertising Your Policy

If you have an existing Equal Opportunities Policy or are in the process of developing one, it is important that a short policy statement be included in all recruitment materials (for example newspaper, radio) to convey a welcome to people with disabilities. Referencing to the policy should be made in all dealing with external agencies involved in recruitment. Widespread reference to the policy will assist in securing increased applications from people with disabilities.

5.1.2 Positive Advertisement Text and Graphics

Advertisements that are positive and reflect the full diversity of society will promote a positive image to people including those with disabilities. Advertisement text and graphics can quite easily be inadvertently unwelcoming to certain groups. Attention needs to be paid therefore to ensuring that advertisements reflect disability and diversity equality and do not deter candidates with disabilities from applying.

5.1.3 Job Description on Request

In advertising vacancies, the inclusion of a statement that a full job description would be available on request, will afford people with disabilities and others who are in under represented groups an opportunity to assess their suitability for a position. Providing candidates access to a job description will also assist candidates to consider in good time, any accommodations they would require to perform the essential functions of an advertised position.

5.1.4 Targeted Recruitment

Targeted recruitment is a form of positive action that seeks to include the pool of applicants with disabilities who apply for vacancies. Advertising vacancies through disability organisations and organisations providing services to people with disabilities will ensure that notification of vacancy reaches the widest audience possible, and is likely to increase the

pool of candidates with disabilities who apply for positions. Not only will this further the equality of opportunities for people with disabilities – it will also help to ensure that an employer has access to the widest range of possible suitable candidates.

5.1.5 Making Information Accessible

Accessibility of advertising media (for example newspapers, radio etc.) for candidates with disabilities must be considered and efforts should be made to ensure the information reaches the widest possible audience. Informal methods of recruitment such as 'word of mouth' or employee referrals may perpetuate existing workforce demographics and limit the pool of candidates with disabilities who can apply.

Accessibility of advertising media for candidates with a visual or hearing impairment should be considered. Interested job applicants may seek information in formats such as brail, disk, enlarged print and e-mail.

5.2 Recruitment Agencies

Many organisations use recruitment agencies to source or screen prospective candidates. Some candidates with disabilities report specific difficulties in accessing employment where the service of such agencies is used. Barriers such as inaccessible premises, and lack of knowledge of disability issues will impact on the number of graduates with disabilities who proceed either to employment, or to an advanced stage in the selection process. There are a number of guidelines to support equality for people with disabilities where recruitment companies are involved in the recruitment process.

In selecting recruitment agencies and assessing existing agencies used, consideration needs to be given to the physical accessibility of the agencies premises for graduates with mobility impairments or for wheelchair users. Where premises or facilities are inaccessible arrangements should be in place for recruitment consultants to go off site to meet candidates with disabilities. It is important that an employer conveys its commitment to diversity and equal opportunity to agencies used in the recruitment process.

Monitoring recruitment companies for existence of appropriate policies and practice will assist in ensuring assumptions are not made about what people with disabilities can and cannot do and that the role of accommodation in facilitating employment is properly considered.

5.2.1 Written Specifications

Recruitment companies and other external agencies involved in recruitment or the screening of applicants should be provided with a written job description and persons specification. Furnishing these specifications will provide a framework of strictly job relevant criteria with which the agencies recruitment consultant can assess and screen applicants. The inclusion of an explicit statement of the employers Equal Opportunity Policy on all documentation forwarded to agencies will also reinforce and remind recruitment consultants of the policy of the hiring company.

6 Screening and Selecting For Interview

Application forms that are commonly used by employing organisations very often contain several potential barriers for people with disabilities who wish to be considered as candidates. The most obvious of these difficulties is for candidates with visual impairments and candidates with certain mobility impairments in hand writing/completing the form. Where possible therefore, employers should consider applications through CV to facilitate all candidates equally.

Where an application form remains the standard applicant procedure the form should be available in alternative formats on request to candidates with disabilities. The availability of this facility should be publicised through advertisement and other media, to ensure prospective candidates are aware of 'positive to disability' policies and that they will be treated fairly.

6.1 Application Forms

Consideration has to be given in developing an application form to the risk of both direct and indirect discrimination. Some applicants with disabilities may not have for instance acquired work experience during school or college. Organisational and other work related skills and competencies however might have been acquired through activities undertaken on a voluntary basis such as work with voluntary agencies or through college related societies. Application forms should clearly provide applicants with an opportunity to outline any skills or competencies that have been developed outside of employment.

The inclusion of health disability questioning on applicant forms has to be approached with caution. It may deter candidates with a history of discrimination from proceeding with an application on the assumption that disability disclosure will preclude further consideration for the position. An intrinsic benefit of eliminating health/disability questioning is the potential for discrimination to be reduced, as screeners do not have information that may influence decision-making.

Where a decision is made to retain health disability questioning on an application form, it is important that the information is requested in a positive, equal opportunities manner and clearly linked to an equal opportunities policy or initiative. Such information can be positively requested in a number of ways. A positive approach would be to reference any question with a statement that the organisation welcomes applications from qualified people with disabilities and that all information is treated confidentially. Likewise, where an organisation intends to implement a positive action initiative, disability questioning should be prefaced by a clear statement of that policy.

6.2 Screening Applications Received

Screening and short listing of applicants using application forms or CV's is an important part of the recruitment process. The following guidelines support equality, screening and short listing for people with disabilities.

6.2.1 Job Relevant Criteria

Research conducted into short listing and screening has revealed that the process is generally subjective, inconsistent and lacks focus. Studies done have found that arbitrary

and bias criteria such as age limits and family circumstances are often used in screening and short listing simply to reduce the number of candidates for consideration.

The use of such job irrelevant criteria may have a proportionally greater negative effect on people with disabilities who may be otherwise well qualified for a position. People with disabilities often have atypical education and work backgrounds due to the impact of disability related issues in the past. Candidates with mental health or health difficulties, for example, may present with chronological gaps on CVs or on applicant forms, when they were receiving treatment for their illness.

Research has particularly highlighted that candidate's age is often unnecessarily considered in screening. This practice of course adversely affects many people with disabilities who wish to be considered as candidates. This is because people with disabilities, for a variety of reasons may be older than their able bodied peers.

It is widely recognised that the objectivity and validity of screening decisions will increase when all applications are assessed consistently using job relevant criteria. These criteria can be identified from the person specification and could include educational qualifications and relevant work experience. Screeners should take care to ensure job relevant and bias factors do not cause applicants to be screened out automatically. Where there are issues around, for example, CV gaps, these should be probed in more detail at interview.

6.2.2 Using More Than One Screener

Screening, even in the presence of a strict process conducted by trained personnel is a subjective exercise. Implementing a policy whereby all screening of CVs and application forms is conducted by a minimum of two personnel, will increase the objectivity of the process and assist in supporting equal opportunity to all applicants including people with disabilities.

6.2.3 Disclosure of Disability

If a candidate has disclosed a disability on their application screeners should ensure they apply the same job relevant criteria to the applicant as for other applicants. If there are disability related questions, background research and appropriate consultation will assist in obtaining accurate information and avoiding the unnecessary exclusion of candidates with disabilities. As outlined earlier, many disability-related organisations can advise employers on issues relating to employing people with various disabilities. Ideally, candidates should be forwarded the opportunity to discuss any implications of their disability for future job performance in an interview setting.

6.2.4 Telephone Screening

Telephone screening has become popular particularly in organisations that require a large volume of telephone work such as in call centres. There are barriers in telephone screening for some candidates with speech or hearing impairments. Where large volume telephone work is not essential to the job alternative screening methods such as brief face to face interviews should be provided to facilitate candidates for whom communication via telephone presents difficulties.

6.3 Monitoring Data

Monitoring is the ongoing collection and analysis of records that are used for planning and evaluating the effectiveness of one's Equal Opportunities Policy. It may be increasingly important in light of developing employment equality regulations in various EU jurisdictions



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for an organisation to request and to retain demographic data on job applicants and existing employers to identify the representation of specific groups in all aspects of employment.

In terms of monitoring access to employment, application forms provide employers with means to collect information relating to applicants disabilities. Once collected the information can be analysed to identify numbers applying in addition to the success rates of applicants through various stages of recruitment (for example short listing first interviews, test, medicals etc.).

Once collected analysis of information like this will highlight areas that require action and appropriate strategies. Where employers note that a few people with disabilities are applying, attention can be paid to whether targeted advertisement strategies are required. Where it is noted that few people with disabilities have been called for interview or are successful in testing, questions can be raised as to the requirement for disability awareness training for screeners, or for extra supports in testing.

A key consideration on collecting data on disability from job applicants is that the information should be kept notably separate from the application form. Applicants will be more confident in disclosing their disability if they are assured the information will not be used as screening criteria and if the purpose of the data collection is made clear.

7 Interviewing In An Equitable Way

The selection interview can be fraught with anxiety for both interviewers and interviewees. For people with disabilities, prior negative interview experience may increase apprehension and anxiety. Lack of familiarity with disability means that many interviewers may not be comfortable interviewing candidates with disabilities too. Issues like this may mean that at interview, candidates with disabilities are hindered from performing at their best, and employers risk not getting the best person for the job. There are a number of things therefore that can be done to ensure the interview process is effective and fair to all participants.

7.1 Preparing For The Interview

Some candidates with disabilities may require facilities or arrangements in order to attend for interview or to be fairly interviewed. Such arrangements may include matters such as:

- Ensuring the place of interview is accessible to all candidates even those with a mobility impairment.
- Inviting deaf candidates who use sign language to bring an interpreter or arrange for an interpreter to be present for interview.
- Alerting staff to be prepared to guide a blind person to the place of interview.
- Going off site to facilitate candidates with disabilities.

Candidates with disabilities may be apprehensive about volunteering any requirements they have, for fear of appearing demanding or encountering discrimination. It is important therefore that employers take the initiative and actively seek this information. In addition to conveying a positive message, such action will help to avoid any difficulty at interview stage.

Employers can invite such requests in numerous ways, the most straightforward being to include a statement to this effect in job advertisements and other job communications.

7.1.1 Interview Training

Training of interviewers is vital to the fairness and effectiveness of the interview as a selection tool. Interviewers need wide ranging training to cover matters such as objective assessment skills, awareness of vulnerability to bias and stereotypes, effective interview skills and guidelines on non-discriminatory interviewing.

Training in all these areas will be equally important but awareness of vulnerability to bias and stereotyping and other errors in impression formation are often particularly relevant. The simple act of making interviewers aware of their vulnerability to these attitudes through training can be very effective in reducing the impact of this on selection decisions.

Similarly, training in interview skills such as rapport building with interview ease may have particular elements for candidates with disabilities. This is because some candidates will experience increased anxiety owing to a history of negative experiences at interviews.

7.1.2 Disability Specific Preparations

Preparation is an important factor in the effectiveness of interview to ensure consistency of approach and role clarity among interview panels. In interviewing people with disabilities, preparation takes on a particularly important role especially if everybody involved in the interviewing has not received disability awareness training.

Where people disclose a disability prior to interview, it would be a good idea for interviewers to do some background research and preparation, with particular focus on the disability and employment related issues, for example, the role of assistive technology, communication etiquette and suchlike.

Pre-interview preparation into deaf issues, for example, in advance of interviewing a deaf person who lip reads, will reveal the difficulties facing these people when adjusting to unfamiliar lip patterns. An interviewer aware of such issues is more likely to allow time at the start of the interview for such a person to adjust and relax so that they can perform at their best.

Disability specific preparation may also identify information with implications for the length of the interview. Some people (for example those with physical/health disabilities), may have associated stamina issues that may affect their performance at interview. To facilitate such candidates, it may be necessary to introduce breaks during interviews, or to restrict interview duration to an acceptable length of time.

7.1.3 More Than One Interviewer

As with screening and short listing, the objectivity and fairness of interviews will increase when people are assessed by a minimum of two personnel. While every effort may be made through, for example, the imposition of a structured interview format, rating skill, and the training of interviewers in relevant areas, good practice in fair interviewing demands that people should be assessed by a minimum of two interviewers whether they are interviewed by separately or together. From a disability perspective, such a practice affords an opportunity for stereotypical thinking to be challenged, and creates a forum for debate where disability rather than ability may be the irrelevant focus.

7.2 Conducting the Interview

Despite its popularity there is clear evidence that an interview is not always valid or reliable, and that they are prone to the individual preferences and biases of the interviewer. It is clear from research however that structured interviews conducted by trained and prepared personnel increases the likelihood that interviews are a fair technique for all and that the best person for the job should be selected.

There are a number of approaches to structuring interviews. One of the most valid and reliable options, which is equally fair for all candidates, is to build the interview around a pre-planned format of job relevant questions, identified from the job description and person specification. These should be used consistently for all interviews. The objectivity of the process is increased as candidates can then be objectively assessed against job relevant criteria.

From a disability perspective, lack of structure allows for interviewers to be inconsistent in their approach to interviewees thereby allowing their own subjectivity and bias to potentially influence the fairness with which all candidates should be assessed. It also allows for job

irrelevant information to be acquired which may mitigate against the selection of a candidate with a disability.

7.3 Obtaining Information About Disability

An effective interview structure applicable to all candidates should provide employers with all relevant information with which to make a decision in relation to the job being recruited for. As with all candidates, the focus when dealing with a person with a disability, should be whether they have the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil the role requirements. However, when a candidate has a disability, guidelines like the ones detailed below take on a particular importance.

7.3.1 Focus on Ability to Perform Specific Job Functions

If an applicant has disclosed a disability or has a visible disability, which would appear to interfere with job performance, it is reasonable to ask the person to describe or explain or demonstrate how this function would be performed even if other applicants are not asked to do so.

Equally where an employer believes that a person may require an accommodation to fulfil the job functions, it would be reasonable to ask the person whether he or she would require any accommodation in order to do the job.

It is obvious, for example, that a candidate who is blind would use adaptive technology in order to take on computer programming work. Where this information is not evident or volunteered in the interview in general, it would be reasonable to enquire whether the person would require any accommodation or adaptive technology in fulfilling the functions of the position and to discuss how that would be organised.

Employers may also have concerns about whether a person's disability has associated health implications, which may affect attendance, again such information should be requested in a positive job relevant manner. Where a person indicates that they need occasional time off for disability related reasons, an employer should consider whether such leave could be provided as a reasonable accommodation.

7.3.2 Avoid Job Irrelevant Disability Questions

Questions about disability at interview should be framed in a job relevant context. Care should be taken to avoid asking disability irrelevant and potentially off-putting or tactless questions. In interviewing a candidate with a disability the following areas are not relevant and should not be focused on in questioning.

- The nature of the disability.
- The severity of the disability.
- The condition causing the disability.
- Any prognosis or expectation regarding the condition or disability.

8 Selection Tests And Other Assessment Techniques

The term psychometric test covers a broad range of tests and questionnaires including ability, aptitude, cognitive ability, personality, motivation and interest tests. When properly adapted to meet the needs of specific test takers, tests can represent a fair and objective way of assessing the abilities of candidates with disabilities.

Providing equal opportunities for this group mean a number of issues must be considered. This is particularly important in light of legislation and court decisions affecting employment law. These highlight the potential for tests to discriminate unfairly against certain groups.

8.1 Making Reasonable Accommodation

While research has shown that well constructed psychometric tests can predict job performance better than any other single selection method, test administration can present significant practical difficulties for some candidates with disabilities. This raises the issue of the validity of tests in assessing people with disabilities fairly.

Unless properly adapted, obstacles within the administration and test completion procedure may make it difficult for the candidate with a disability to be assessed fairly in comparison to other people. A person with dyslexia for example may be disadvantaged in speed tests given that they take longer to read written instructions and would therefore be likely to complete fewer questions. The same person may have the ability to effectively complete the test however if approached differently. Similarly, a deaf/hard of hearing candidate may be disadvantaged in their ability to assimilate oral instructions in the test administration process. Other disadvantages will arise for candidates with other disabilities.

In some cases, even with an accommodation, the psychometric test and its format may disadvantage candidates to the point where it is not reliable or valid measure of their true abilities. In this case alternative assessment procedures such as interview will need to be considered. An example of this are the many standardised tests used containing diagrammatic and tabular information. Given that information in this format does not easily translate into Braille, the appropriateness and fairness of the test for candidates relying on Braille must be considered.

Researchers agree on the importance of interpreting all test takers' performance in context, and considering test results alongside other information about these candidates. This issue is particularly important for people with disabilities. It is recommended therefore that people who identify their disability prior to testing should be afforded an opportunity for interview. Such a practice can be implemented by adopting the positive action initiative of granting an interview to all applicants with disabilities who meet essential job requirements.

8.2 Meeting Candidate Requirements Prior To Testing

In order to prepare any test accommodations for candidates with disabilities, advance notice will be required. The letter or telephone call inviting people to a test should therefore outline the nature of the assessment tool and enquire if any specific systems or accommodation will be required to facilitate their attendance.

Where possible it is recommended that all candidates be afforded access to a practice leaflet in advance of the test. Some people may not have prior testing experience and may know what accommodation they would require. Providing a practice leaflet will give such people an opportunity to identify in good time any accommodation or supports they need for full and fair participation.

Most occupational psychologists can provide employers with guidelines on testing people with disabilities. One feature of their advice may be a matrix approach to focus thinking on the requirements of the candidates with various disabilities through the various stages of testing. It can be useful for organisations that use testing to take a matrix approach and to build up knowledge of accommodations as more and more people are tested and request a range of varied accommodations.

The accessibility of the testing venue and its facilities to candidates with mobility impairments and/or wheelchair users should be considered when booking venues for testing. Where the testing venue is inaccessible to wheelchair users, separate testing sessions for such people may have to be arranged.

8.2.1 Accommodations In Test Administration

The heterogeneity of disability means the psychometric tests will necessitate different accommodations for different candidates. It is difficult to give an exhaustive account of all possible accommodations or adjustments required. The key requirement is that each person's needs are assessed on a case-by-case basis and expert advice, for example, from occupational psychologists and test publishers will usually be necessary.

Extra time in completing the test will be an essential requirement for some people where accommodations or adjustments have been made and administration of tests in these cases should ideally be provided on a one to one basis. The extra time needed will depend on the extent of the disability and the nature and format of the test. The difficulty in scanning Braille text for example means that paragraph comprehension questions may take substantially more time in this format, where short analogy items may take only slightly longer in Braille than in other formats.

Any additional time allocated should be selected to meet the specific needs of the candidates so that the test taker with a disability is at neither an advantage or disadvantage in undertaking the test.

8.3 Sample Accommodations For People With Various Disabilities

While many graduates with disabilities undertaking tests may require no specific accommodations, the following guidelines indicate the type of accommodations that may be required by particular candidates.

8.3.1 Blind/Visually Impaired

Accommodations required will depend on the extent of visual loss and the nature of the test. In meeting the needs of candidates, tests must be presented in appropriate formats such as oral administration, Braille, large print etc. Time limits may need to be extended and speed tests avoided.

Certain types of test materials may prove problematic to produce in alternative formats. Test takers may require assistance in marking answers, and specific lighting levels might be

necessary in order that tests can be completed. They may also require additional equipment such as talking calculators and Braille note takers. Requirements for extra space and large desks may be necessary.

8.3.2 Physical Disabilities

For candidates with mobility impairments affecting use of hands, the assistance of a test administrator or personal assistant may be required in turning pages and marking answers, or material may be presented in an alternative format (for example large print answer sheets). Test time limits may need to be adjusted and speed tests to be avoided.

Rest breaks may be particularly important for test takers with stamina issues. Candidates may also require large desks to accommodate their requirements.

8.3.3 Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Provision of comprehensive written instructions and facilitation of sign language interpreter may be required. Time limits may need to be adjusted. A tactile system for starting and stopping tests may be agreed. Among pre-lingual deaf people, sign language and not English is usually the first language. This means that such candidates are essentially taking tests in a second language, which should be considered in test interpretation.

8.3.4 Specific Learning Disabilities

For disabilities like dyslexia, types of adjustments required will depend on the person and on the nature of the learning disability. Tests may need to be presented in alternative format such as perhaps computer based or orally administered. Frequently used adjustments are the allowance of additional time for ? tests and reconsideration of speed tests in areas of specific weakness.

8.3.5 Other Disabilities

As with all candidates, the particular requirements of candidates with other disabilities should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. For example, candidates with epilepsy often experience drowsiness associated with medication.

For candidates with mental health difficulties, one to one testing may assist in alleviating anxiety associated with the formal group testing process. Some test takers may have concentration difficulties and require frequent breaks in testing.

8.4 Interpreting Test Results

There are two basic approaches to selection based on the test scores of a group of applicants. The top down approach selects people from the highest score downwards until sufficient numbers have been selected. The cut off approach selects those who score above a designated cut off, which represent the minimum level of ability on a test, which is acceptable for future job performance.

The cut off approach is more likely to facilitate people with disabilities than the top down approach. Even where accommodations are afforded, the disadvantaged posed by disability with testing suggests that these candidates will have greater opportunity for success in the selection process where cut off approach is used.

8.4.1 Relevant Norm Tables

Most psychometric tests are norm referenced. This means that a candidate score on a test is interpreted by comparing it with the scores obtained by others on the same test. Standardised tests from test publishing companies who generally include several sets of norms, which represent the average that people of varying demographic status, and with their levels of attainment on the test. In choosing norms for test interpretation it is important to choose a norm set appropriate to the level of ability required for the job that is being tested for.

It is generally considered inappropriate to develop independent norms for people with disabilities owing to the heterogeneity of disability. Therefore particular care should be paid to the demographic appropriateness of the norm group to ensure that the test poses no extra disadvantage for a candidate with a disability.

8.4.2 Expert Advice

Validity and fairness in test demand standardised conditions such as uniform test instructions, specific uniform test constraints and uniform test responses for all candidates who undertake a test.

The alterations in administration and test completion, which may be required for some candidates means that a standardisation of testing is affected. This may have implications for test interpretation. While most major test publishers and occupational psychologists will be able to advise on the implications of adjustment in test administration for interpretation of test results, occupational psychologists generally recommend that a less rigid approach be taken when interpreting scores, allowing, for example, a greater band of error than is usual.

The most prominent consideration tends to be flexible and positive and to assess whether a candidate has demonstrated a level of ability acceptable for the job requirements. Where cut off approach to test interpretation is taken, selectors should be prepared to accept candidates with disabilities who fall just below the cut off point. Similarly, if using top down approach to test results, candidates with disabilities who narrowly miss the top group of candidates should be considered further.

8.4.3 Personality Testing

Personality testing has become a regular feature of many assessment processes. When testing people with disabilities, it is important to ensure that the person's privacy is maintained. Otherwise answers may be distorted. For example, if a reader is used for the questions, organisations should ensure the candidate can record his/her own answers, for example using a computer keypad, Dictaphone or Braille note taker.

In interpreting personality measures it is important to apply the same level of flexibility that should be applied to the interpretation of psychometric tests. The employer needs to be aware of how a person's disability might affect behaviour too when responding to particular items and scales. For example a person with a visual impairment may feel less comfortable in social situations because of the difficulty in recognising other people and the lack of non-verbal cues when interacting.

8.5 Other Assessment Techniques

Many employers use assessment centres in recruiting. This technique has been found to have a high degree of objectivity and fairness, and a good predictive value in assessing future job performance. Its strength as a selection tool is attributed to the use of multiple techniques that allow the weakness of a particular method to be compensated for by the strengths of another. The multiple approach also compensates for lack of skill in some areas by allowing people to show off strengths in other areas.

Providing equal opportunities for candidates with disabilities means a number of issues must be considered. Laid out below are some guidelines, which support equal participation by people with disabilities in assessment centres.

8.5.1 *Alternative and Flexible Assessments*

There are a number of potential barriers to equal opportunity in assessment centres for people with disabilities, depending on the nature of the assessment tool and the disability in question.

Even with accommodations, people with disabilities may not have an equal opportunity of performing at their best during assessment centres. Specific exercises may create barriers, which cannot be removed, and alternative assessment methods or elimination of specific exercises may be required. Overall, assessors should be flexible when rating candidate performance and consider the disadvantage posed by a candidate's disability.

8.5.2 *Briefing the Assessors*

Assessment centre personnel should have received training/instruction in objective rating and evaluation of candidate behaviour and equal opportunity awareness including vulnerability to bias and stereotyping. The frequent provision of feedback on performance to candidates in assessment centres requires that the assessors must be briefed on providing positive and constructive feedback that would be appropriate to a person with a disability.

Disability awareness training or instruction in specific disability preparation for personnel involved in assessment centres will assist in ensuring attitudinal and communication barriers do not disadvantage candidates with a disability. In addition all relevant personnel should be advised on specific disability requirements and accommodations being facilitated. Having to repeatedly explain to assessors the accommodations needed in particular exercises can be exhausting. These create additional stress for candidates with disabilities.

8.5.3 *Timetable Implications*

Providing the accommodations required by candidates with disabilities may have implications on the time tabling of assessment centres. Where extra time is being facilitated, for example, such candidates may be at risk of losing valuable break time. One to one testing may be necessary in some cases.

8.5.4 *Access To Assessment Centres*

The accessibility of the venue and its facilities to wheelchair users and other mobility-impaired candidates should be considered when booking the assessment centre venue. Given the often-lengthy duration of testing sessions, accommodation, meals and special dietary requirements may also have to be considered.

8.5.5 Accommodations In The Assessment Centre

The accommodations or supports needed by people with disabilities in assessment centres will vary depending on the type of disability and selection exercise. Many of the accommodations required have already been outlined in previous sections. Expert consultation may be required in selecting appropriate accommodations, amending procedures and interpreting candidate performance.

8.5.6 Advance Notice

Candidates with disabilities will need to be afforded an opportunity to inform an organisation in good time of any accommodations required to participate in assessment centres. Candidates should be advised of the component tools in advance and invited to indicate any supports that they would require. As with other selection tools, this information can be requested in the correspondence inviting people to the assessment centre.

9 Pre-Employment Enquiries

Requesting and checking references is common in many organisations. A reference check is often incorporated into the selection process on the operating assumption that past behaviour is the best indicator of future behaviour.

The information obtained from a referee is taken as an indicator of how the person will behave or perform in future employment. This assumption may be questionable for some candidates with disabilities. It is important to consider that in some cases, the nature of the disability or issues around it may have resulted in unavoidable absences or other performance issues that may have since been resolved.

If an unsatisfactory reference is obtained for a candidate, consideration should be given to these issues and questions like the following might be asked:

- Did the person have the supports or accommodations they needed in the past employment?
- Have issues impacting at that time since changed?

The requirement for flexibility in considering references obtained for candidates with disabilities is particularly important given that research into the validity and reliability of references has found them to be a poor source of valid information.

9.1 Medicals And Health Screening

Many organisations incorporate a pre employment medical into the recruitment process. This is to ascertain candidates' medical fitness or unfitness for work. In some cases the medical is part of the selection process and is a standard procedure for all candidates. In other cases, the offer of employment is conditional on a candidate gaining the necessary medical approval.

Candidates with a disability are at risk during the pre employment medical of being screened out unfairly owing to a disability or health related issues. In many cases, medical assessments are made without consideration of the particular job or the work environment for which the candidate is being assessed, leading in some cases to candidates being unfairly refused positions.

There are a number of issues and recommendations regarding medicals, which are outlined below and which can assist employers in providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities alongside other candidates.

9.1.1 *Timing of Medical*

Any medical or health assessment should be carried out after a job offer has been made. The offer of employment may however be conditional on a satisfactory medical outcome.

The benefit of conducting a medical at this point is that people with disabilities will have less chance of being unfairly discriminated against on the basis of their disability, and correspondingly, employers would be less likely to encounter discriminatory claims. Employers also benefit by having the unnecessary expense of medically assessing all people for selection.

9.1.2 Job Relevance

In order to assess candidates with disabilities fairly, the medical examiner conducting pre employment medicals should be familiar with the job and the work environment for which the candidate is being assessed, and the specific health requirements, if any, for individual positions.

Because it may be impractical in some cases for medics to visit the job site, Human Resources or line personnel when forwarding a prospective employee for assessment can relay this information. This can be done either by telephone or through the provision of a written job description and person specification, which outlines any consideration with potential health or disability implications.

This practice will ensure that a candidate's medical assessment for work is job relevant and that the disability or health issue is viewed in a job relevant context.

9.1.3 The Role of Accommodations

A vital consideration in assessing candidates' medical fitness for work is the role of accommodations can play in obtaining medical approval. Various accommodations can be made to enable people with disabilities to be effective as employees. In the first instance therefore, organisations should inform their medical examiners that candidates with disabilities are welcome and that they are prepared to consider appropriate accommodations to facilitate employment.

Any medical assessment of fitness for work therefore should evaluate whether accommodation would create the necessary conditions to approve work fitness.

9.1.4 Avoiding Blanket Exclusions

As outlined above, medical assessments should consider the job applicant in tandem with information on the job and job environment. Accordingly blanket exclusions of people with specific impairments should be avoided.

9.1.5 Medical Documentation

Organisations with written medical documentation should incorporate a categorisation of "conditional fitness". This categorisation will afford a medical assessor the opportunity to qualify the conditions attached to medical approval. In the case of, for example, a person with epilepsy, the inclusion of a conditional fitness categorisation on the medical documentation would allow for a medical examiner to state the certification of fitness is conditional on the person not driving. Consequently, HR and line managers can consider whether flexibility can be employed and accommodation made to facilitate the candidate.

9.1.6 A Right Of Reply

People with disabilities should have an opportunity to respond to medical results where they are certified as unfit for work, or where their medical suitability is in any way questioned. This opportunity should allow the candidate to seek a second medical opinion or to consult with an appropriate disability specialist organisation. People with disabilities (or their doctors) through direct experience often have the most relevant information and may be able to suggest an effective accommodation, that has not yet been considered to overcome workplace difficulties.

10 Employing People With Disabilities

There is a risk that employers can make assumptions about the type of jobs that people with disabilities can and cannot do. With technical developments, and simple adjustments to the job/job environment and terms and conditions of employment, people with disabilities can undertake positions today that they may previously have been unable or unsuitable for.

There are similar myths and assumptions about disability in general. It is often assumed for instance that a person with a disability will have mobility restrictions. In reality disability encompasses a broad spectrum, which may include sensory, physical, psychological, health and learning disabilities. Similarly, because those with disabilities were traditionally segregated from the mainstream of society, many have not had contact with people with disabilities and they experience anxiety and unease interacting with people with different needs and abilities as a result.

When referring to people with disabilities, the area of language and etiquette is particularly important. The medical approach to defining disability has been increasingly replaced by a social definition, which recognises the restrictions imposed on people with disabilities in a world designed for people without disabilities. Language of course plays an important part in our lives and it is important that the language we use in relation to people with disabilities reflects this social model of disability. In general the following should be noted:

- Impairment is a positive term, which refers to the functional limitation experienced by a person that can be caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment. Thus, an inability to walk is an impairment.
- The word handicap can cause offence to many people with disabilities. Handicap is a negative term associated with the notion that people with disabilities are somehow deficient or subnormal.
- Avoid using invalid as it literally means non valid. People with disabilities prefer to be called people with disabilities or people with an impairment.
- Never use the terms victim of, afflicted with, suffers from, or sufferer when referring to people with disabilities.

10.1 Blind And Visual Impairment

One of the most common causes of disability, visual impairment or blindness is a sensory disability where the level of impairment varies greatly. Many people who are considered legally blind have some vision. Those who have low vision may rely on residual vision with the use of adaptive technology, and those who are totally blind may have some visual memory, depending on the age when vision was lost.

Some blind people will be familiar with Braille, which is a system of reading and writing in which tactile dots represent letters/numbers and punctuation marks. It should not be assumed however that candidates will have this skill, as the numbers of blind and visually impaired people able to use Braille fluently are quite small. Avoid using objectification – the blind – as it depersonalises people. Describe people with visual impairments as blind people or people with visual impairment or partially sighted.

10.1.1 Communicating with a Blind or Visually Impaired Person

The following points should be noted when communicating with a person who is blind or has a visual impairment:

- Address the person by name and introduce yourself and others in the room.
- Ask the person if he or she would like to sit down and if necessary offer guidance to a chair by gently placing the person's hand on the back of the chair.
- Speak clearly and in a normal voice – not loudly, slowly or with exaggeration.
- Indicate verbally when entering or leaving the person's presence.
- Do not approach a guide dog without permission. A guide dog, being highly disciplined, should not be petted or distracted when working.

10.1.2 Employing People who are Blind or Visually Impaired

Research has shown that employers' attitudes represent the most significant barriers to employment for a blind or visually impaired people. Developments in technology have significantly influenced the variety of jobs accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. With scanning, e-mail and reader services developing rapidly, the standard level of reading, or computer interface required in a job will not present undue difficulty for a blind or visually impaired person.

Employers often cite health and safety concerns with regard to employing blind or visually impaired people. Experience suggests that there are no additional health or safety risks as long as the organisation's usual health and safety guides are used appropriately. In fact, it may well lead to the introduction of improved systems because employing a person with a visual impairment can focus attention on issues impacting on everyone, but which are often overlooked, such as ensuring walkways and exits are clear of obstruction.

10.1.3 Assistive Technology

Samples of technology, which a blind or visually impaired person may use in the workplace includes:

- Computer software with Braille output
- Computer software to enlarge on screen print
- Scanning or voice synthesiser which produces speech output
- Voice activated computers
- Closed circuit television (cctv)
- A technical aid that magnifies images
- Talking calculator
- Tape recorder
- Braille note takers

10.2 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

A significant proportion of the population have some form of hearing loss, ranging from mild to profound. The forms of communication that people who are deaf or hard of hearing will use may depend on the type, extent and onset of their hearing loss. People who are hearing

impaired are more likely to use hearing aids and use spoken language to communicate, and will lip-read. Some profoundly deaf people will not use spoken language and may communicate through sign language. A majority of the deaf community prefers the term hard of hearing to either hearing impaired or partial hearing.

10.2.1 Communicating with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing Person

Some people with a profound hearing loss may be able to hear some speech or sounds when amplification, such as a hearing aid device, is used. However, even with amplification, spoken communication should be supplemented by:

- Natural gesture and body language
- Lip or speech reading
- Written information

10.2.2 Lip Reading

Lip reading requires a lot of concentration and can be exhausting over a long period. As much as three quarters of lip reading is guesswork, relying on some extent on contextual clues. It is important when interviewing or in general communication with a person who is lip reading to:

- Speak clearly and at a reasonable pace
- Allow time for the person to adjust to unfamiliar lip patterns
- Avoid nodding too much or walking around the room
- Use facial expression and if possible maintain eye contact with the person
- Gain the person's attention before asking a question
- Give a clear view of your lips and mouth, avoid drinking or smoking when talking to a person who is lip reading.

10.2.3 Communicating via Sign Language Interpreter

People who are deaf are part of a linguistic minority whose first language is sign language. The role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication, not to participate in or offer comments or opinions on the subject matter. Qualified interpreters are bound to a code of confidentiality and cannot speak on any professional working situation.

10.2.4 Employing People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

While people who are deaf or hard of hearing face many barriers to employment, very few positions will be inaccessible to such people, with or without the use of accommodations or flexibility from employers. In employing people with hearing loss, employers often find additional benefits such as improved concentration and productivity levels owing in part perhaps to decreased vulnerability to distraction.

The effect of a hearing impairment in employment depends on the nature of the hearing loss and the nature of the job. A position with intense verbal communication may present particular difficulties to a profoundly deaf person. Equally the work environment may be an important factor in considering the effectiveness with which a person with a hearing loss may be able to communicate in the workplace. A noisy open plan office for example may cause distraction to a person with a hearing impairment who is trying to conduct an interview in the same room.

It is often assumed that deaf people will be unable to use a telephone at work. While this may be true in some cases there are a number of technological aids that facilitate the use of a telephone as an integral part of a job.

10.2.5 Assistive Equipment

Sample equipment that may facilitate people who are deaf or hard of hearing include:

- Amplifiers (loud speaking telephone aids and adaptations to switchboards).
- Audio loop system that is fixed or mobile and can be placed in specific areas in the office and would be detected by a hearing aid.
- Flashing or vibrating signals; any device producing sound can be converted to light and made to alert deaf people.

10.3 Physical and/or Speech Disabilities

Physical disabilities can stem from a wide range of causes. Among the most common permanent conditions are musculoskeletal disabilities such as partial or total paralysis, amputation or spinal injury, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy and head injury. People with a physical disability may use aids such as a wheelchair, callipers?, crutches or a walking stick. Some people may require the full or part time assistance of a personal assistant. A common mistake is to associate a physical disability with health problems. While some individuals may have a health related condition this is not always the case. In some conditions such as cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis, there may be an associated disability to one's speech, sight, hearing or learning.

A speech difficulty may be associated with a physical disability, but can also be a single condition. Speech difficulties include fluency problems, stuttering and stammering, chronic hoarseness etc.

A wheelchair provides an invaluable method of getting around for many with physical disabilities and it is not experienced as restraining. You should therefore not say somebody is "wheelchair bound" or "confined to a wheelchair" but is a wheelchair user or uses a wheelchair.

10.3.1 Communicating with People with a Physical Disability

The following points should be noted when communicating with a person with a physical disability:

- Speak clearly and in a natural way – not too loudly, slowly or with exaggeration. If a person uses a wheelchair, seat yourself at the level of the chair.
- Never presume the person needs assistance, even if he/she appears to be having difficulty. Ask the person if they would like assistance.
- If the person requires assistance, ask them for directions.
- There is no need to be sensitive about using terms such as walking or running.
- Always speak directly to the person and not to the personal assistant.

10.3.2 Communicating with People who have a Speech Difficulty

A person with a physical disability may also have a speech difficulty. In such circumstances the following should also be observed:

- People with speech difficulties need time and encouragement to communicate ideas orally. Don't finish or fill in gaps in a person's speech.
- A person who appears uninterested is more likely to be fatigued as communicating with a speech difficulty can be very tiring.
- If there is difficulty in understanding what a person is saying, ask him or her to repeat the question or statement. If necessary repeat what you believe they have said for clarification.

10.3.3 Employing People with Physical Disabilities or Speech Difficulties

The effect of mobility impairment in employment depends on the nature of disability. Unless the work is of a very physical nature, a mobility impairment is unlikely to present difficulties that cannot be overcome through adaptations of buildings and equipment.

The accessibility of premises is the most significant factor for people who use a wheelchair. Unless proper supports are in place, or unless the person owns a car, travel as an integral part of a position may present difficulties. Some people with impaired hand function may require specific supports in the workplace. For example, where a position entails a large emphasis on writing, the use of technology such as voice-activated computers will facilitate this function.

10.3.4 Personal Assistant (PA)

A person with a significant disability may employ a PA on an ongoing basis to enable him/her to live independently and to pursue education and employment. The PA may assist the person with domestic and personal matters, or may facilitate communication on behalf of the person if the latter has a significant speech impairment.

In reality, employed physically disabled people may require only part-time assistance from a PA in such areas as travelling to and from work. Employers who engage people who retain the full or part-time assistance of a PA should note that the PA is employed by the graduate and not by the employer. The insurance cost of the PA in the workplace is covered by the agency providing the PA. All PA's are bound by a code of confidentiality, and cannot discuss anything arising in the workplace.

10.4 Mental Health Difficulties

Circa 10% of the population will experience some form of mental health difficulty in their lifetime. Mental illness can take two forms – neurosis or psychosis. Neurotic problems encompass conditions commonly referred to as "the nerves". A severe neurotic condition can lead to a nervous breakdown. Common neurotic disorders include anxiety disorders (for example phobias, panic attacks), eating disorders and forms of depression. Psychosis is viewed as something that exists outside of normal mental function. The most common forms of psychosis are schizophrenia and other forms of manic depression.

10.4.1 Communicating with People with Mental Health Difficulties

Given the prevalence of mental health problems in society, it is likely that organisations already employ a number of people with mental health difficulties, such as depression, anxiety or an eating disorder, but who choose not to disclose these conditions. However a person with a more complex and disabling condition such as bipolar depression or schizophrenia may self identify.

The stigma attached to psychiatric illness is significant. People who have had psychiatric history will have experienced isolation and rejection. It is important to consider the following when working with people who disclose their disability:

- Dispel the myth that people with schizophrenia are dangerous.
- Remember that people with mental illness, regardless of its severity, can lead active and full lives.
- Keep in mind that most people recover fully from an episode of mental illness.
- Appreciate that many families are affected by mental illness at some point. It should not be taken to be a case of 'us and them'.

10.4.2 Medication

People with mental health difficulties may take medication as a very important part of the treatment of their condition. People with more serious mental health difficulties such as schizophrenia may have to stay on medication for the rest of their lives. While medication may be very effective in most cases, there are side effects including drowsiness, blurred vision, tremors, skin rashes, nausea and dizziness.

10.4.3 Employing People with Mental Health Difficulties

Depending on its severity, mental illness can have little or no impact on job performance as medication can be effective. Many people develop strategies to cope with their disability too. Health promotion of all staff, both physical and mental, should be a priority of employers. Health conscious employers who provide a workplace that promotes and supports positive mental health will create a supportive employment environment for all employees. It is useful however to consider some of the characteristics of people with significant mental health difficulties in order to address the issues of providing a supportive workplace. An employee with a mental illness or history of this kind may be likely to:

- Have low self esteem.
- Have some difficulty in integrating with the rest of the workforce.
- Have some difficulty socialising and engaging in small talk.
- Have some difficulty reading interpersonal and social situations.
- Be sensitive to correction and criticism.
- Lack natural supports and social activities.
- Experience side effects from some medication such as drowsiness and lack of concentration.

10.5 Specific Learning Disabilities

There are a range of specific learning disabilities, dyslexia being one that is experienced by between 4-10% of the population. Dyslexia is of genetic origin and is unrelated to sensory disability or general cognitive ability. Variable degrees of difficulty may be experienced in understanding or using one or more areas of language including listening, speaking, reading, writing and spelling in addition to difficulty with maths in some cases.

While dyslexia cannot be cured, many people have developed coping strategies. There are, in addition, a number of positive aspects associated with the condition. Many people with dyslexia display strengths in creativity, visual and spatial skills and in innovative, original thinking and problem solving. The level of reading and writing required for a job would be of particular relevance to a person with dyslexia. With minimum job restructuring however, and the use of computer technology, there are few jobs that cannot be done by people with dyslexia.

While many people would not require any specific employment supports, one or a combination of the following may be required in the workplace.

- Instructions. Oral instructions to be accompanied by a written version.
- Flexibility: extra help or job restructuring where a lot of reading or writing is required and in some cases additional time may be needed to complete tasks.
- Computer hardware. A range of assistive technologies can help people with dyslexia with reading and writing tasks.
- Computer software. Packages with good spell checks, electronic dictionary etc. are extremely useful.

10.6 Significant Health Difficulties

A common mistake is to equate disability with health difficulties. People who for example are blind or deaf do not have health conditions. While it is beyond the scope of this guide to consider the full range of health difficulties that people may present, outlined below is a summary of some common conditions.

10.6.1 Asthma

Most people with asthma developed it in childhood or early teens. Factors that can trigger an asthma attack are usually described as either allergic or non-allergic. Allergic factors include dust, pollen, mould, animal hair and certain foods or drinks. Non-allergic factors include exertion, smoky atmosphere, cold, dampness, cold chests and infection. In most cases however asthma is caused by a whole variety of factors. Treatment is generally very successful through use of preventive measures such as inhalers. Chronic asthma however can persist sometimes for a long period and can cause fatigue and inertia and even minor tasks require tremendous energy.

10.6.2 Cystic Fibrosis (CF)

Cystic fibrosis is a common inherited genetic disease of the respiratory and digestive systems that involves malfunctioning of mucus glands. The condition varies greatly in its severity and the way it affects individuals.

There is no cure for CF yet but research is ongoing. Some people with CF may undergo surgery for heart and lung replacement. The most common forms of treatment however are physiotherapy (which can often be performed outside working hours), diet, exercise and antibiotics. For many people with CF, their condition does not prevent participation in full-time employment. For others, flexible work practices such as part-time will be particularly important.

10.6.3 Diabetes

It is estimated that 2-3% of the population has diabetes, with an estimated 5% incidence among older people. Diabetes occurs when the pancreas is unable to produce enough of the hormone, insulin, to convert glucose to energy. There are two types of diabetes: insulin dependent and non-insulin dependent. The first type occurs where there is a high level of sugar in the bloodstream and the second in older people, which can be treated with good diet and medication. Blood glucose testing and insulin injecting are essential in the life of a person with insulin dependent diabetes. People who are insulin dependent must be allowed to carry out these procedures in the workplace whenever necessary. Once diabetes is controlled, people will not have any significant employment difficulties.

10.6.4 Employing People with Significant Health Difficulties

The extent to which a health difficulty will impact in a work environment depends on the individual. Employers may already employ people who have what is thought of as a disability but who are not regarded as disabled because their ability to do the job is not affected. An example may be of a person with diabetes whose condition is controlled by insulin.

The accommodations required by people in these instances will often relate to flexibility in the workplace, through flexible start times and part-time work. The flexibility will facilitate not only new employees joining the company but also existing employees who acquire a disability.

11 Reintegrating Staff Who Become Disabled

Many people in employment become ill or get injured at some point during their working lives. This can happen to them while they are doing their job or it can happen outside of work, maybe at home or in leisure activities. Responsible employers have "return to work" strategies that apply in such circumstances. These ensure a person does not become unnecessarily unemployed as a result of illness or injury that leaves them with a disability.

We will look at return to work strategies under the term reintegration. By reintegration we mean the process of ensuring that employees who have become long-term absent return to work in a timely and safe manner. This process involves a number of activities, including medical rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation, which generally takes place out of the workplace, and the range of activities, which take place within the workplace that enables the employee to work at a suitable job in a suitable work environment.

We will look at this matter by focusing on four aspects:

- The process of reintegration
- Policy for reintegration
- Infrastructure and resources
- Reintegration strategies

Reintegrating staff that become disabled should be a key area in employment policy and practice over the next few years for a number of reasons. These include:

- The costs of long-term absence are high and continually rising.
- Long-term absence accounts for the majority of days lost through absence.
- The ageing of the workforce increases the probability of long-term absence.
- Legislation will most likely requires this for people who become disabled.

Reintegration will be a matter of key importance because there are significant benefits to employers who operate it effectively. Benefits include:

- Retention of valued staff
- Reduction or elimination of replacement costs
- Fulfilment of equality policies by retaining staff
- Corporate social responsibility
- Reduction of insurance costs
- Improved public image
- Consistent with quality management policies
- Improvements in productivity
- Improvements in HR management practices

Senior managers and HR managers in particular play a key role in promoting the early and timely return to work of employees who become long-term absent from work owing to illness or injury. They can do so in a number of ways. These include examining their current policies in this area, creating new ones if appropriate, examining infrastructure and resources that are in place and by examining the reintegration strategies used to monitor and control the process.

This guide outlines key recommendations in each of the above areas and by following these recommendations, employers can ensure that the reintegration processes for which they are responsible, do actually work in an efficient and effective manner. As a first step it is useful to examine the sequence of events that usually occur following a serious illness or injury to an employee. The process of reintegration activities provides a framework for understanding what the employer can do to promote effective reintegration.

11.1 The Process of Reintegration

When a worker becomes ill or injured, necessitating absence from work, the workplace can undertake a number of activities which will serve to reduce the length of time the worker is absent and to increase the prospects of successful reintegration. In particular, the employer should communicate actively with the worker, establishing the status of the worker's health, and ensuring the worker is aware that the employer is committed to a reintegration process. Also the employer should take an active role in liaising with the agencies responsible for medical rehabilitation and vocational rehabilitation. These activities are best organised through the appointment of an employee with responsibility for overseeing and managing the reintegration process.

When the worker has received treatment for their illness or injury, the rehabilitation process begins. This involves, on one hand, efforts to restore as much functional capacity as possible to the worker, and on the other, to provide the employee with new or additional work related skills, which help them to adjust to any residual incapacity they may have. There are often problems of co-ordination in this process between the two types of rehabilitation agency and with the workplace. It is essential that the employer takes an active interest in these processes. Otherwise the links to the workplace may be broken or the rehabilitation may not be focused on an early and timely return to work.

When the employee is ready to return to work, the workplace can undertake a number of activities that will ease the return to work process. Chief among these is the process of job placement, that is ensuring that the returnee is placed in a job appropriate to their abilities and capability. Job placement is supported by the processes of job design and work organisation, that is arranging the tasks that make up a job and then the relationship between that job and the overall work process. In addition, any accessibility issues or assistive technologies needed by the returning employee are incorporated into this plan.

It is often the case that people returning to work are unable to take up their former job. This may be a temporary or permanent phenomenon. In such cases it is appropriate to assign the returnee to partial work duties, within their former job, if that is possible, or in another job that is more appropriate to their capabilities.

The employer should engage in a number of monitoring and communication activities when the employee returns. In particular, there is a need to monitor the progress of the returnee in their work for the purpose of identifying problems that need to be resolved.

11.2 Policies for Effective Reintegration

There are a number of policies that the employer can initiate, which lead to the establishment of an effective reintegration process. These include:

- Human Resource management policy
- Reintegration management policy
- Occupational health and safety policy

- Equality policy

11.2.1 Reintegration management policy

The basis for good practice in relation to managing the early and timely return to work of people who become long-term absent, is a sound and comprehensive workplace policy on these issues. There are a number of strands to policies that are important in this regard. Some of these policies may already exist within the enterprise, while others will need to be created or amended to ensure that it is clear that early return to work is a goal of the organisation to which it gives its full support.

The overall aim of policy is to ensure that there is a clear statement that early return to work is the norm within the organisation and to ensure that there are the necessary infrastructures, skills and practices in place to realise that aim. This policy (reintegration management policy) should incorporate the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders within the enterprise who are involved, the way they should interact, the activities they should undertake, the resources available to them and the types of outcomes they are expected to achieve.

11.2.2 Human Resource Management Policy

The Human Resource management function is the best place to locate responsibility for the reintegration process as it is generally responsible for many of the processes and the personnel that need to be involved in reintegration.

Critical matters that contribute to a positive reintegration process include:

- Employment contracts
- Remuneration
- Job design
- Work organisation
- Liasing with external agencies
- Job placement
- Reintegration management
- Incentives
- Job labour management agreements
- Occupational health services
- Training and development
- Safety and early intervention
- Transition work

An important function of the HR department concerns the communication of the reintegration management policy throughout the organisation. This helps to overcome one of the main barriers to integration – the lack of knowledge and awareness of the process, which often leads to bias and discrimination against some body who becomes disabled.

11.2.3 Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Occupational health and safety policy is generally concerned with the control and management of occupational risks. However, it can also play a major role in the reintegration process through the monitoring of the returnee's health and well being. It also has a role to play in assessing the risks associated with the job, which the returnee is working at and by communicating to management and co-workers the capabilities of the returnee worker. Policy and occupational health and safety need to be altered to reflect this expanded role.

It should also be made clear that the occupational health and safety practice plays an important role in relation to the prevention of occupational related illnesses or accidents. This preventive role, which also incorporates workplace health promotion, seeks to prevent the need for rehabilitation and reintegration in the first place.

11.2.4 Equality Policy

The new developments at legislative level in relation to equality policy need to be reflected at enterprise level. These developments provide the opportunity and the obligation to incorporate improved treatment of workers who are returning to work following illness or injury. At a minimum, equality policy at company level should state the commitment of the company to providing equal opportunities for returning workers to have access to suitable employment.

11.3 Reintegration Strategies

Of course, policies operating in isolation will not be enough to ensure that good practice takes place. It is also necessary to resource these policies and to adopt a proactive management practice to ensure their implementation. Effective reintegration management practice requires a proactive management policy and methods that places the reintegration of ill or injured workers high on the agenda of the organisation. This can be achieved through the following methods:

- Co-ordination of the reintegration process
- Development of clear responsibilities and reporting relationships
- Communication of policy to all levels in the organisation
- Active monitoring of context with external rehabilitation agencies
- Development of appropriate skills
- Adopt a case management approach
- Assessment of costs and benefits

In essence the approach taken to managing the reintegration process should be similar to the management of any other personnel issue in the organisation. It should involve policy, planning, resourcing and monitoring actions. Following this course enables the reintegration programme not only to achieve maximum effectiveness but it also enables its effectiveness to be demonstrated.

11.4 Infrastructure and Resources

In order to ensure an efficient integration process, adequate resources and infrastructure need to be established by the employer. Appropriate resources include:

- Adequate budget
- Adequate training
- Designated reintegration management function
- Joint management – labour support
- Adequate management information system

It is important to keep in mind that the benefits from successful reintegration are significant. There are benefits for the individual, the employer and for society at large. Benefits include reduced stress, improved income prospects for the individual, reduced costs for the employer, expansion of the labour market and promotion of participation in the labour market for society as a whole.

APPENDIX

European Disability Organisations

BELGIUM

CSNPH

Conseil Supérieur National des Personnes Handicapées
Tel: 0032 2 509 82 79
CrHandi@minsoc.fed.be

DENMARK

DSI De Samvirkende Invalideorganisationer

Invalideorganisationer
Tel: 0045 36 38 85 28
dsi@handicap.dk

GERMANY

DBR

Deutscher Behindertenrat
Tel: 0049 228 82 09 30
Laschet@vdk.de

GREECE

NCDP

National Confederation of Disabled People

Tel: 0030 210 523 89 61
esaea@otenet.gr

SPAIN

CERMI

Consejo Español de Representantes de Minusvalidos
Tel: 0034 91 360 16 78
asuntoseuropeos@cermi.es

FRANCE

CFHE

Conseil Français des personnes Handicapées
Tel: 0033 1 40 78 27 25
sophie.baudier@apf.asso.fr

IRELAND

www.socialdialogue.net

LUXEMBOURG

INFO HANDICAP

Tel: 00352 72 77 55
pascal.arnoult@iha.lu

HOLLAND

VGPN Vereniging

Gehandicapten Platform Nederland
Tel: 0031 26 325 40 23
bureau@gehandicaptenraad.nl

NORWAY

FFO Norwegian Federation

of Organisations of Disabled People
Tel: 0047 22 79 91 00
gensekr@psoriasis.no

AUSTRIA

ÖAR Österreichische

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Für Rehabilitation
Tel: 0043 1 513 15 33
williams.euburo@oear.or.at

PORTUGAL

CNOD Conferderação

Nacional dos Organismos de Deficientes
Tel: 00351 21 839 49 70
info@cnod.rcts.pt

FINLAND

The Finnish Disability Forum
Tel: 00358 9 396 04 455
pirkko.mahlamaki@nki.fi

SWEDEN HSO

The Swedish Disability Federation
Tel: 0046 8 546 40 400



e-Learning Course, "Disability for Managers"

EMPLOYERS' GUIDE TO DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

hso@hso.se

PWDI

People with Disabilities in Ireland

Tel: 00353 1 872 17 44

info@pwdi.ie

ITALY

CNSD

Consiglio Nazionale Sulla Disabilità

Tel: 0039 06 37 35 00 87

giambatman@tin.it

UK

UKDFEA

UK Disability Forum for Europe Affairs

Tel: 0044 20 7725 4242

bc.is@btopenworld.com