

The Disability Confident Recruiters essential checklist

by Susan Scott-Parker OBE

Forward

This guidance is grounded in the reality of business and best corporate practice and in the principles that underpin the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – which promotes the full inclusion and fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities, in 181 countries.

Only best practice transforms legal obligation in any jurisdiction to sustainable business and societal benefit.

With these business-relevant resources we aim:

- To make it easier to employ people with disabilities fairly, on the basis of individual capability, talent and potential.
- To help engineer more effective, efficient, and equitable labour markets, which – because employers are positioned as valued service users and potential allies – enable significantly more people with disabilities to gain meaningful employment at all levels.
- To enable the business improvement which benefits both the business and people with disabilities.
- To create opportunities for businesses to become leaders in the transition to accessible and equitable workplaces and labour markets.
- To facilitate innovative solutions and focused collaboration between business leaders and leaders with disabilities.

This checklist, written in collaboration with Simon Brown from Sightsavers, is adapted from the open-source Employer Toolkit originally published by Inclusion Works, a consortium of international organisations of people with disabilities and non-governmental organisations, funded by UKAID.

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Principles

A disability-confident business:

- Understands how disability impacts every part of the business: its people, talent, customers, suppliers and the communities and economies in which it operates.
- Removes barriers for people with disabilities, for example by providing accessible websites, communications and buildings.
- Makes adjustments which enable specific individuals to contribute as valued colleagues, potential colleagues and customers, and to enable people with disabilities to contribute on an equal basis with others as far as is reasonably possible.
- Does not make assumptions about human potential on the basis of a label (i.e. disability).
- Understands that learning how to adapt for human reality benefits both the business and the world's 1.3 billion people with disabilities, and their families.

This document translates those principles into a practical 'best practice' checklist for HR and recruitment specialists and often goes beyond compliance with any disability discrimination legislation. Noting that only best practice can transform legal obligation to both business and societal benefit. The reader is expected to also understand which policies and practices are and are not lawful in their particular jurisdiction.

Leadership fundamentals

Eight Tips on how to make it easier to routinely recruit people with disabilities on the basis of their individual capability, aspirations and potential to contribute to business success:

1. A senior executive sponsor is made responsible for the 'disability-confidence' strategy which enables the entire organisation to improve its overall accessibility and disability-related performance. This includes IT, Property and Facilities Management, Learning and Development, Procurement and HR. The sponsor reports progress to the executive.

2. A named manager is responsible for ensuring that the adjustments which job seekers, new joiners and colleagues with disabilities might require are provided quickly and efficiently - often the only workplace adjustments many people with disabilities require is that recruiters and managers keep an open mind.

3. The built environment becomes as accessible and usable as possible because the company has listened to expert advice – especially from people with a range of disabilities and expertise.

4. The IT department will provide the most frequently encountered IT-related adjustments and assistive devices quickly and cost-effectively and know where

to go for expert guidance, including the Maturity Model and resources produced by companies in the Accessible Technology Taskforce.

5. Managers need to understand that some supports may also be less tangible, i.e. ensuring that communication is accessible through various means such as plain language, sign languages or supporting employees with intellectual disabilities with a buddy system.

6. Invest in the targeted work experience programmes, internships, job shadowing opportunities, apprenticeships, mentoring and/or customised training that as it builds the Disability Confidence of your managers and colleagues enhances the employment prospects of disabled talent.

7. Partner with those non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) who are willing to take time to get to know and support your business.

- Ask them to carefully pre-screen candidates and enter into service-level agreements that specify the level of support available to the employee and to their manager pre- and post-job offer.
- Require organisations offering disability training and consultancy to always involve people with disabilities as leaders and subject-matter experts.

8. Senior business leaders are encouraged to resource and actively engage with Business Disability Networks (BDNs) which:

- Enable business-to-business (B2B) learning.
- Facilitate the co-production of practical business-relevant tools, guidance and services.
- Enable their business to define and deliver best practice.
- Provide forums where business leaders and leaders with disabilities can meet informally, to learn directly from each other.

The following Essential Checklist will help you to deliver equal opportunities by ensuring your recruitment processes are truly welcoming, accessible, flexible, and barrier free for disabled candidates. Remember: we make reasonable adjustments so that candidates with disabilities can compete on an equal footing.

Recruitment checklist for disability-confident employers

Attraction

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
1	Communicate your commitment to employing people with disabilities internally and to the wider		

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
	community – through multiple channels – making it clear that you are motivated by the need to access talent and that you are willing to make the reasonable adjustments which enable candidates with disabilities to succeed.		
2	Learn directly from people with disabilities, i.e., invite a range of people with disabilities at varying stages of their careers to join you informally over coffee and ask: “what would you do in our shoes to encourage more people with disabilities to apply? What should we be doing differently?”		
3	Encourage applications by offering a ‘Guaranteed Interview Programme’ to any applicant with a disability who meets your basic requirements (see point 19) for the job. Train interviewers as they prepare for those interviews. Invite proposals to improve from the candidate and from the interviewer. Utilise on-the-job disability awareness training for interviews.		
4	Plan to communicate particular training and job opportunities (and your interest in attracting applicants with disabilities) much more widely and creatively, using channels you may never have used before (such as radio, the corporate website, community centres, podcasts and career fairs).		
5	People with disabilities are highly visible in these communications as valued colleagues, potential colleagues, customers and fellow citizens.		

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
6	Your promotional materials are accessible. Routinely ask people with a range of disabilities to do user testing and to advise on possible improvements.		
7	Your workforce is encouraged to spread the word via social networks and their families that candidates with disabilities will be welcomed.		
8	There is an up-to-date list of people with disabilities who have indicated an interest in joining the company, including those who have applied unsuccessfully. HR consults this list first when a vacancy opens up before advertising more widely.		

Application

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
9	The recruitment process, step by step, is explained to every candidate, so they can help you anticipate and remove barriers – e.g., enabling someone with a speech impairment or who is deaf to bypass the usual telephone interview.		
10	Every applicant is asked at an early stage: “what could we do which would make it easier for you to successfully navigate our process?”		
11	A telephone number, email and land address or other accessible channel is offered for job seekers with disabilities who have questions regarding the company and/or the application process.		

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
12	A short, accurate job description is provided, clearly stating what the candidate will be required to achieve. Convey that you know there will be different ways of achieving these objectives and that you are prepared to be flexible.		
13	People with a range of disabilities and expertise routinely test your end-to-end online recruitment process. They advise on barrier removal and practical solutions. You are working towards a process that meets the Web content (WCAGAA) accessibility standard.		
14	Application forms are available in accessible formats. You have noted that PDFs are often, if not always, inaccessible. Ensure that application forms are written in plain language.		
15	Application forms do not ask: “do you have a disability?” unless it is stated clearly that candidates with disabilities will be offered a guaranteed interview or other positive action designed to give them the opportunity to demonstrate their potential.		
16	Application forms do not ask for details regarding someone’s medical diagnosis or health condition. These details are personal and confidential.		
17	The company does not operate blanket exclusions on the grounds of disability and/or particular impairments – for example “deaf people cannot work in this department”.		
18	The company encourages its recruiters to ask: “could this deaf		

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
	person do this job if we were flexible and made reasonable adjustments?"		

Assessment

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
19	Managers are encouraged to be flexible regarding the levels of work experience and educational qualifications required, given that many people with disabilities have been denied such qualifications by an inadequate education system and NOT because of the person's capability and potential. Managers focus on a candidate's potential to acquire necessary skills to perform job requirements.		
20	Recruiting managers understand that they treat people differently to treat them fairly, which is why they make necessary adjustments at each step of the recruitment process.		
21	Candidates who tell the employer that they have a disability and meet the basic criteria will be offered a guaranteed interview. These interviews will be reviewed routinely to understand what enables – and what prevents – these candidates from being hired.		
22	Managers are trained in how to efficiently provide the most frequently requested adjustments in consultation with the candidate. Such adjustments include:		

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra time to complete a test, answer questions and move from one test to another. • Providing alternative methods of communication including bypassing telephone interviews. • Making interview rooms accessible for people with mobility impairments. • Moving someone’s office to the ground floor. • Flexitime • Providing specialist assistive devices/software such as Jaws, Dragon, Braille keyboard. • Providing human aides such as job coaches, sign language interpreters or personal assistants. 		
23	Enable candidates disadvantaged by the traditional interview process to demonstrate their potential by offering options such as extended on-the-job interviews, job try-outs or other creative alternatives.		
24	Training for recruitment managers goes beyond ‘sensitisation’ and is practical, action oriented and grounded in the reality of both the business and the lived experience of people with disabilities.		
25	Candidates are offered choice regarding how they wish to apply and be assessed, noting that AI-powered assessments present particular risks to both the job seeker and the employer: none have been validated for candidates with disabilities, databases are disability biased and standardised processes are inherently discriminatory.		

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
26	Psychometric tests are not used unless there is evidence that they have been validated for the candidate's particular disabilities and it is certain that the tests themselves are accessible.		
27	The recruitment process does not require candidates to demonstrate skills and competencies that are not required to do the job.		
28	Candidates with disabilities are only required to have pre-employment medical exams if this is mandatory for every candidate. Candidates are not asked to disclose their medical diagnosis or medical history during an interview or at any stage of the recruitment process.		
29	The company does not operate any form of blanket exclusions for medical conditions. Rather, it asks itself whether this person with this disability can perform the job with certain reasonable adjustments.		
30	Unsuccessful applicants are given detailed feedback that helps them to become more employable.		

Appointment

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
31	Successful candidates with disabilities are offered the same pay, employee benefits and career prospects as their peers without disabilities.		
32	The job offer, communications and contract of employment are in an accessible format.		
33	The manager responsible for delivering workplace adjustments is immediately informed when a new employee requires adjustments, so that these can be available when they join.		
34	The fact that certain adjustments have been agreed is recorded in an 'adjustments agreement' or 'passport', copied to both the employee and HR, so that the employee need not renegotiate their adjustments with any new manager.		
35	Information regarding the employee's disabilities or health condition is kept highly confidential and is only shared (with the employee's consent) on a need-to-know basis, and on the judgement of the employee and their manager.		
36	Key performance indicators are monitored and frequently reviewed with the senior executive responsible for the disability-confident employer strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many applicants said that they had a disability? Many disabled people will not, for a variety of reasons, inform an employer of their disability. 		

Action Item	Description	Confirmed Y/N	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many had the guaranteed interview? • How many were shortlisted? • How many were hired, and into which roles/teams/salary levels? • What are the turnover rates? • What are the career progression rates compared to their peers? • Why were applicants with disabilities rejected? • How many applicants requested which types of adjustments? • How many new joiners had the adjustments they needed when on-boarding, and at what cost? • How many requests for adjustments were denied as unreasonable - and why? 		

THERE ARE 8 KINDS OF WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS



What must the employer do differently to recruit, employ & develop this person fairly, on the basis of their individual capability and potential?

1 Keep an open mind:

Give the person the chance to contribute and treat them as you would wish to be treated.

2 'Think' differently: challenge assumptions: move from 'deaf people can't work in teams' to 'what could this deaf person do if we were flexible?'

3 Create an accessible & usable environment: access to premises, signage, lighting...

4 Tolerate processes which might take a bit longer to attract talent, to assess individual capability, adapt on-boarding, adapt training, ensure development programmes are accessible.

5 Change procedures & policies, bypass standard interviews, adapt medical related policies, permit flexitime, change procurement policies.

6 Train managers, colleagues, IT, facilities managers, procurement...

7 Remove barriers created by IT & Technology related policies and services; and enabling access to assistive devices e.g. voice activated software, captioning, braille keyboards...

8 Welcome human aides: job coaches, interpreters, personal assistants, readers.

The bdi charter – a roadmap to consistent best practice worldwide

