

GET *inclusive*

Policies and procedures



SCOPE

= Equality for
disabled people



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1. Policies and procedures toolkit

Why inclusive policies and procedures matter

Scope research shows that:

53% of disabled people have experienced bullying or harassment at work.

58% have felt at risk of losing their job because of their impairment.

Recommendation

To review all policies and procedures for inclusivity.

To monitor their impact and effectiveness.

Step 1: Do an inclusive review of your organisation.

Step 2: Decide where you need to focus.

Step 3: Implement with the whole organisation.

Step 4: Monitor and review effectiveness.

Outcome

- 1) Create an inclusive workplace.
- 2) Ensure your workforce reflects local area and customer base.
- 3) Be leaders in inclusive workplaces.

Many organisations have inclusive policies and procedures in response to legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010.

But Scope's research shows that employers are not following these policies fully, as:

- **53%** of disabled people have experienced bullying and harassment in the workplace

- **58%** have felt at risk of losing their job because of their impairment
 - **1 in 5** go as far as hiding their impairment from their employer
- This toolkit will look at:
- things to consider when creating inclusive policies and procedures
 - how to monitor policies and ensure you implement them
 - going beyond legal obligations to support an inclusive working culture

Review your policies

The first step is to review your current policies and procedures to see if they are inclusive.

The second step is to monitor the impact of policies. Collect and analyse data across the organisation on:

- attraction
- recruitment
- selection
- retention
- progression

The need to collect this data is increasing. The Government has insisted on gender pay gap reporting. It is encouraging reporting on the ethnicity pay gap. As we strive towards equality for all, we hope disability pay gap reporting won't be far behind.

Make sure that your policies and procedures can keep up to date with employment law.

See our Recruitment toolkit on how to implement these effectively.

The Get Inclusive organisation review

During the review, you need to consider how inclusive your organisation is.

It will help you to discover:

- how well your organisation reflects its local population
- the level of understanding within management and other employees

This will enable you to identify areas that need training and resources.

Analysing the data can help your organisation benchmark its inclusivity against all the protected characteristics:

- disability
- age
- ethnicity
- gender reassignment
- sexual orientation
- religion
- sex
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership (employment only)

58% have felt at risk of losing their job because of their impairment.



Recruitment

Our recruitment toolkit looks at this area in more detail.

Does your recruitment policy encourage or discourage applications from disabled applicants?

Often applicants with skills and experience feel they are unable to apply. They might not know they can ask for reasonable adjustments, such as reduced or compressed hours.

Here are a few simple steps to widen the pool of talent available to you.

Advertising vacancies

Advertise the guaranteed interview scheme. This means disabled applicants will get an interview if they meet the minimum criteria for the role.

Does your recruitment policy encourage or discourage applications from disabled applicants?



Encourage people to ask for reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and selection process. This can encourage more applications.

Think about the recruitment agencies you use. Are they providing an inclusive candidate pool?

Increase your exposure to disabled candidates by trying:

Get Inclusive Employment services – inform the Get Inclusive manager of your vacancies and these will be shared with our employment service customers.

[Disability Jobsite](#)

[Disabled Workers Co-operative](#)

[Diversity jobs](#)

[EmployAbility](#)

[Evenbreak](#)

[Incluzy](#)

Job adverts

Consider the language you use in job adverts, for example:

- Standard wordings can make candidates with some impairments discount themselves before applying. ‘Excellent communication skills’ may put off people with neuro-diverse impairments. Is this necessary for the role in question?
- Some organisations do not advertise pay or salary details. This may put off candidates on benefits, who may not apply without this information in advance.
- Use clear language to make sure everyone can read your adverts, whether they have dyslexia or sight loss.

Flexible working policy

Every employee has the legal right to ask for flexible working. This is not just for parents and carers. Most organisations have a flexible working policy.

By law, an employee can apply for flexible working if they have worked consistently for you for 26 weeks.

But we recommend flexible working for disabled employees and those with health conditions as a reasonable adjustment. This may seem like treating disabled people more favourably but could allow them to travel off peak or to manage a fluctuating condition.

Performance management policy

A performance management policy is vital for business success.

But an inclusive policy should:

- identify if an employee’s performance is suffering because of disability or a health condition
- discuss with the employee if they need any reasonable adjustments to improve

This discussion can be part of an Access to Work application or occupational health referral.

Once adjustments are in place, you can agree a timescale for the employee to meet your business requirements.

If the reasonable adjustments do not improve results and you have met all other training and resource needs, you can then follow the normal performance management procedure.



Reasonable adjustments policy

Most organisations have a reasonable adjustments policy.
Read our reasonable adjustments toolkit for more details.

Sickness and absence policy

Sickness and absence management is a complex area. The law is not clear. There have been various cases that have tested it, but there are no clear precedents.

Employers often believe that they must:

- treat everyone the same with sickness and absence
- enforce the same procedures and disciplinary triggers across the workforce

On the face of it, treating a disabled employee the same as everyone else would seem to be a way to avoid employment tribunals. But does it?

In the case of *Cox v Post Office* (IT/1301162/97), the employer dismissed Mr Cox for exceeding the sickness and absence limits. This tribunal concluded it was unfair dismissal. The employer had included Mr Cox's absence due to asthma. But his health condition was covered under law (Disability Discrimination Act) and should not have counted.

The tribunal considered that the Post Office had enough resources to absorb Mr Cox's absence without it negatively affecting business operations.

So, does an organisation treat all absence the same or not?



Disability leave

Disability leave is a more inclusive policy. It treats any condition-related absence under a separate policy.

You will still need to understand when:

- disability absence affects business operations
- reasonable adjustments are failing

There is no legal obligation for organisations to follow such a policy. But it's fairer way of managing a diverse workforce in an inclusive organisation.

Bullying and harassment policy

Most policies cover the more common forms of bullying and harassment, for example:

- threatening or abusive behaviour
- humiliation
- verbal abuse such as taunting
- violent gestures

But there are more subtle forms of bullying in the workplace, for example:

- unachievable deadlines
- removing or withholding responsibilities
- only allocating menial tasks
- excluding people from meetings relevant to their role

Disabled employees often report these types of incidents.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to protected characteristics that has the purpose or effect of:

- violating the dignity of an individual, or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual

An employee may have a legal case even if the harassment is not directed at them. If they have witnessed harassment that makes them feel they are in a hostile, degrading, intimidating, humiliating or offensive environment, they may also complain.

Monitoring

Once you have reviewed your policies and decided what changes to focus on, make sure you can monitor the outcomes.

Can you use existing monitoring? If not, what other systems can you introduce?

The next section looks the data you need to provide insights into your organisation's impact on inclusivity.

It's important to communicate changes to all staff so that inclusive practice becomes part of your everyday culture.

Monitoring the effectiveness of inclusive policies and procedures can be subjective. But collecting data from various sources can help to identify areas you need to improve.

Representation of disabled staff

Monitoring data

- percentage of employees recorded on HR systems as disabled or with a health condition
- data from staff surveys

Insights

Analysing this data provides an insight into the representation of disabled staff. Look out for differences between HR systems and anonymized survey data.

Possible actions

- disability awareness sessions or training
- initiatives to encourage employees to talk about their conditions

Language is important. Ask employees how they describe themselves (self-identify). Be open to employees talking about more than one condition, such as hearing loss and a mental health condition.

The key to openness in the workplace is to build trust and confidence with employees. An internal communications plan to encourage employees to share their experiences. Explain why you are collecting data.

1 in 5 go as far as hiding their impairment from their employer.

Reasonable adjustments requests

Monitoring data

- Number of requests
- Proportion of reasonable adjustments agreed

Insights

The number of requests shows how comfortable employees are asking for reasonable adjustments.

Monitoring the proportion agreed helps to identify any issues in the process. Explore why requests are not agreed.

Possible actions

Training for line managers on embedding reasonable adjustments into performance reviews and one-to-ones.

Using adjustment passports which are a live record of adjustments between a worker and their manager, this can help to ease transition between teams and departments.

It's important to communicate changes to all staff so that inclusive practice becomes part of your everyday culture.



Reasonable adjustments timeline

Monitoring data

Log the time required for end to end case management.

Insights

Insights can highlight potential issues in the processing or procurement of reasonable adjustments.

Possible actions

Provide named contacts responsible for progressing reasonable adjustments.

Adjustment passports ease transition between teams or departments.

Reasonable adjustments evaluation

Data

- Records of follow-up meetings
- Satisfaction survey for those who have used the service

Insights

Insights can highlight the suitability of the adjustments and the accessibility and effectiveness of the process.

Possible actions

- Review policy and procedure
- Adjustment passports to ease transition between teams or departments

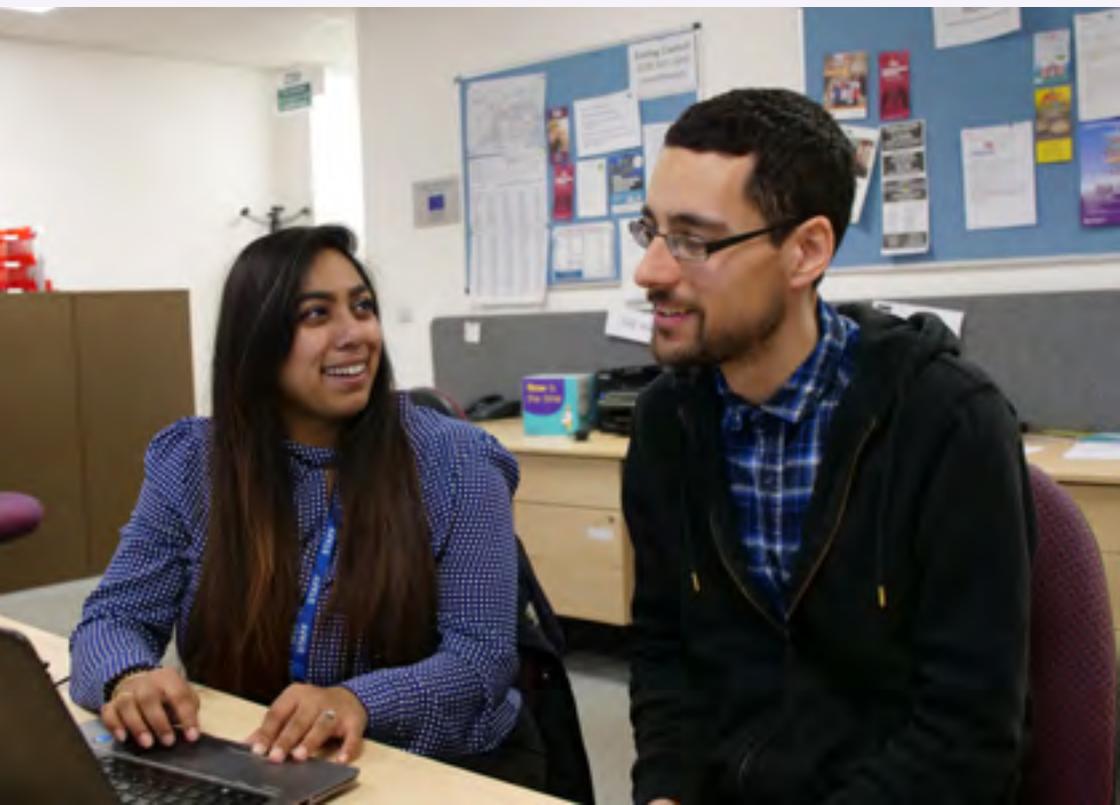
Reasonable adjustment actions

To show a proactive approach, we suggest employers also monitor:

- reasonable adjustments turnaround times
- employee satisfaction with support during the recruitment and onboarding process

Organisations can publish a statement on how they provide reasonable adjustments to their employees. If possible, include a case study or two.

This will help disabled applicants to feel confident in discussing their individual needs.



The key to any successful policy or procedure is the buy-in of the whole organisation.



Progression

Monitoring data

- Percentage of disabled employees at different levels of the organisation
- Employee surveys
- Exit interview

Consider any grievances or HR cases with employees who have left.

percentage of disabled employees who apply for promotion and percentage who are successful.

Insights

- Can show areas of unintentional bias within the organisation
- Can highlight potential issues around workplace inclusivity

Possible actions

- Disability awareness sessions for staff, such as Workability sessions from Inclusive Workplace Network
- World of work sessions to meet potential candidates

[Using End the Awkward resources](#)

Implementation

The key to any successful policy or procedure is the buy-in of the whole organisation.

Policy and procedures alone will not address issues around inclusion.

There needs to be a cultural change to combat myths and unconscious bias within society.

To build this culture, Get Inclusive would recommend:

- disability awareness training throughout the organisation through our partner organisations
- using our Workability sessions and the End the Awkward resources as a platform for discussion
- asking disabled role models to talk about their experiences and the benefits of a more inclusive workplace



It is estimated that employing just 5% of the 1 million disabled jobseekers would boost the economy by up to £6 billion by 2030.



Benefits

With inclusive policies in place that are monitored and tested, you can:

- attract and retain a more inclusive workforce
- understand the needs of disabled customers and stakeholders
- maximise your organisation's reach

It is estimated that employing just 5% of the 1 million disabled jobseekers would boost the economy by up to £6 billion by 2030.

So more inclusive employment opportunities are better for individuals, communities and the economy in general.

For any further advice, speak to your Inclusive Workplace Manager.

Become a disability gamechanger!

Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you, drop us an email at getinclusive@scope.org.uk

SCOPE = Equality for disabled people