Employability Limerick

Practical.
Inclusive.
Impactful.

CREATING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

A TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS



Practical tools | Fresh ideas | Stronger outcomes | Real impact



Employability Limerick

CONTENTS

Pg 2 Introduction – explain purpose and benefits of inclusive employment

Pg 3 Inclusive Recruitment Framework

Pg 4 From Framework to Action

Pg 5 Bias Free Language Tips

Pg 6 Myths about Disability Hiring – And the Reality

Pg 6 Inclusive Recruitment and Job Design

Pg 7 Inclusive Interviews & Assessment

Pg 8 Quick Summary Checklist for Inclusive Recruitment

Pg 9 Onboarding and Workplace Integration

Pg 11 Manager's Guide to Reasonable Accommodations and Equality Responsibility

Pg 15 Grants and supports

Pg 17 Assistive Technology and how to Introduce it at work

Pg 20 Metrics and Reporting: Measuring Inclusion Success

Pg 21 Leadership & Culture: Modelling Inclusion

Pg 22 CSR & Employability Partnerships

Pg 23 Disability Profiling

Pg 24 Supporting Employees' Mental Health & Wellbeing

Pg 25 Strategies for supporting Neurodivergent Employees

Pg 26 Strategies for supporting Employees with Physical Disabilities

Pg 27 Resources and Tools: Useful Templates & Local and National Supports

Pg 30 Disability Awareness: Key Dates and Opportunities



Introduction

Employability Limerick created this toolkit to help employers build inclusive, supportive workplaces where people with neurodivergent identification, disabilities, and people experiencing mental health difficulties or mental illness can thrive.

Inclusive employment isn't just about doing the right thing - it makes good business sense too. Inclusive workplaces can support staff retention, bring different perspectives and ways of thinking into teams, strengthen workplace culture, and enhance an organisation's reputation.

The employment gap is significant, and employers can help close it.

In Ireland, around 34% of people with a long-lasting condition or difficulty were at work in 2022, compared with 73.2% of the working-age population overall. (Central Statistics Office, 2022)

Ireland's employment gap also sits within a wider European picture, with Ireland among the EU countries with a significant disability employment gap.

This is the situation in Ireland, and you can be part of changing it.

Behind these figures is a significant pool of talent, skills and potential that employers can help unlock. By making recruitment more accessible, considering appropriate workplace supports, and creating an environment where people feel valued and included, employers can play an important role in closing the employment gap and creating meaningful employment opportunities.

This toolkit provides practical, straightforward guidance to help you take positive steps towards building and sustaining an inclusive workplace from recruitment and onboarding to workplace supports, communication and creating a culture where everyone can contribute, grow and succeed.

Why Inclusive Employment matters:

- Better staff Retention
- Stronger Workplace culture
- Fresh ideas and problem solving
- Positive reputation

Inclusive Employment

Creating a truly inclusive workplace will benefit everyone. This guide provides practical steps to help you recruit, welcome, and support employees with disabilities, health conditionals and mental health challenges, so you can unlock talent, strengthen engagement, and build inclusion from the very beginning.

Hiring people with disabilities doesn't need to be complex. It's about creating fair, accessible processes that focus on skills and ability. Inclusive recruitment widens your talent pool while also supporting better retention, stronger performance, and more diverse teams.

This section walks employers through each stage of the recruitment process, from job design through to assessment, helping ensure that candidates of all abilities can apply, participate, and succeed.

The Inclusive Employment Framework

Successful inclusive employers focus on six key pillars:

1. Recruitment & Hiring

- **Job Descriptions:** Plain language, focus on essential skills, include welcoming statement
- **Accessible Applications:** Multiple formats, clear contact for adjustments
- **Interviews:** Structure, skills-focused, adjustments offered
- **Alternative Assessments:** Task demonstrations, micro-internships, project-based evaluations, Job Shadow
- **Training**: Guidance for staff and line managers on disability awareness, inclusive recruitment, unconscious bias, and practical ways to support candidates and new employees with disabilities.

2. Onboarding & Integration

- **Structured Onboarding:** Clear role expectations, buddy assigned, gradual task introduction
- **Accessibility & Accommodations:** Needs and accommodations are discussed during induction, ensuring accessible documents, communication and support
- **Check-Ins:** Regular feedback, communication clarity
- **Inclusive Culture:** Mentorship, staff awareness sessions, social inclusion activities

3. Reasonable Accommodation & Support

- **Request Process for accommodations:** Transparent, Confidential, structured, documented process e.g. Work and Access grant (see page 19)
- **Example of Low-Cost / No-Cost Options:** Flexible hours, ergonomic furniture, assistive technology and adaptive supports
- **Implementation & Monitoring:** Regular review, track effectiveness, review and adjust as needed
- **Disclosure processes / Psychological safety:** for employees disclosing disabilities or health conditions

4. Mental Health & Wellbeing

- **Manager Training:** Unconscious bias & stigma reduction
- **Activities:** Mindfulness breaks, Lunch & Learn, peer support circles, quiet spaces
- **Employee Support:** Access to EAPs, flexible work arrangements, wellness days

5. Leadership, Learning & Accountability

Inclusive workplaces require **visible leadership commitment, confident managers, and ongoing learning.**

Key actions include:

- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) & Networks – creating connection, raising awareness and giving employees a voice.
- Disability and inclusion awareness training
- Practical guidance for line managers
- Understanding legal and workplace responsibilities
- Promoting psychological safety and respectful behaviour
- Setting clear inclusion objectives and leadership accountability

6. Metrics & Reporting

- Retention rates for employees with disabilities
- Accommodation uptake and implementation success
- Employee satisfaction & engagement
- Recruitment diversity & participation in programs
- Continuous Improvement Actions



From Framework to Action

The six pillars provide a starting point for building a more inclusive workplace. You don't need to tackle everything at once. Inclusive employment is built through small, practical changes that become part of everyday workplace practice.

Start with what you already have - ask yourself:

- **What are we already doing well?**
- **Where are the gaps or barriers?**
- **What could we improve?**
- **Who needs to be involved?**
- **What is one practical change we can make now?**

Make inclusion part of everyday practice

Inclusive employment is not a one-off initiative; it can be reflected in the following ways:

Recruits	Welcomes	Supports	Develops	Listens	Reviews
Attracts, identifies & selects talent	Integrates new hires & sets expectations	Provides resources, guidance & assistance	Enhances skills, trains & offers growth opportunities	Gathers feedback, engages in dialogue & understands needs	Evaluates performance, progress & provides constructive feedback

Each stage provides an opportunity to remove barriers, strengthen inclusion and create a better experience for everyone.

You don't have to do it alone

Employers can draw on a range of supports and expertise, including:

- Employees and employee networks
- Line managers and HR teams
- Disability and inclusion specialists
- Occupational health or workplace support services
- Government employment supports and schemes
- Organisations working with people with disabilities

A practical first step

Choose one area from the six pillars and identify one action you can take.

It could be as simple as reviewing a job description, asking candidates if they require adjustments, providing disability awareness training for managers, or creating a clearer process for requesting workplace supports.

Small changes can make a big difference when they are consistent, supported and sustained.

Bias-Free Language Tips

Avoid labels that define someone by their disability: e.g., say **"person with a disability"** instead of **"disabled person"** (person-first language).

Use **neutral, respectful descriptors**:

- "wheelchair user" vs "wheelchair-bound"
- "blind or partially sighted vs "blind person or visually impaired"
- "autistic person" vs "employee with autism"

(some contexts may prefer identity-first—consult the individual)

Avoid assumptions about capability or lifestyle: describe tasks, not limitations.

**Disclaimer: Language and terminology relating to disability may change over time as research, guidance and best practice evolve.*

Myths About Disability Hiring — And the Reality

Many employers want to be inclusive but are unsure where to begin. Let's start by clearing up some common misconceptions.

Myth	Reality
"Hiring people with disabilities is complicated."	Inclusive hiring usually involves small adjustments, not major changes.
"Workplace adjustments are expensive."	Most accommodations cost little or nothing and many are supported through grants.
"Productivity may be lower."	Research consistently shows high retention, reliability, and strong performance.
"We might say the wrong thing."	Openness and respectful conversation build trust and clarity.

Inclusive Recruitment and Job Design

Before posting a role, review the job itself. Inclusive design can remove barriers before they even appear.

Tips:

- Separate essential vs. desirable criteria – focus on skills and abilities that truly impact job performance.
- Avoid unnecessary physical or sensory requirements – only include these if legally or practically required.
- Flexible work patterns – consider part-time, remote, or hybrid arrangements from the start.
- Task clarity – break the role into clear responsibilities rather than broad, ambiguous tasks. Example: Instead of "Must be able to lift 25kg daily," consider "Ability to lift or move items occasionally, with available equipment or team support."

Writing Inclusive Job Descriptions

The way you advertise a role sets the tone for accessibility and inclusion.

Guidelines:

- Use plain, clear language – avoid jargon or overly technical terms.
- Focus on outcomes rather than rigid processes.
- Include a welcoming statement: “We encourage applications from people with disabilities and provide reasonable accommodations throughout the recruitment process.”
- Highlight your willingness to provide adjustments during interviews or assessments.

Tip: Review your job postings with someone outside your team — does it feel approachable and inclusive?

Accessible Application Processes

Your application process should be as barrier-free as possible.

Best Practices:

- Offer alternative formats: online, email, or even video submissions.
- Ensure your online application system is screen-reader compatible.
- Avoid timed tests or overly complex online forms unless essential.
- Provide clear contact information for candidates to request accommodations.

Example: Include a short line in your application form: “If you require an adjustment during the recruitment process, please contact [name/email].”

Inclusive Interviewing

Interviews should focus on skills and potential, not how someone performs socially.

Tips for managers:

- Ask candidates in advance if adjustments are needed.
- Share the interview format and questions if possible.
- Offer extra processing time or breaks.
- Use skills-based questions rather than generic “fit” questions.
- Avoid assumptions about ability or motivation.

Example: Instead of “How do you work in a fast-paced environment?” try “Here’s a task from the role. Can you walk us through how you would approach it?”

Alternative Assessment Methods

Some candidates shine in practical scenarios rather than traditional interviews. Consider:

- Work trials – short-term hands-on experience in the role.
- Task demonstrations – practical skills exercises.
- Job carving – focusing on tasks that match a candidate's strengths.
- Industry Advice Session – especially for creative or technical roles.
- Micro-Internships: Short-term, low-risk work experience (1–4 weeks) to assess skills and workplace fit.

Benefits:

- Demonstrates skills beyond interviews
- Reduces bias from traditional recruitment
- Gives candidates a chance to showcase strengths in a practical environment

Tips for Employers:

Provide clear instructions and expectations

Offer support or accommodations if needed

Treat these experiences as both assessment and onboarding opportunities

These methods are particularly helpful for neurodivergent candidates or those with sensory or social processing differences.

Common misconceptions:

Barrier	Reality	Practical Solution
"It's too expensive"	Most adjustments low cost	Show grant + cost examples
"Health & safety risk"	Individual assessment required	Risk assessment template
"They won't fit the team"	Culture is shaped by leadership	Inclusion training
"Productivity concerns"	Evidence shows strong retention	Case study

Quick Summary Checklist for Inclusive Recruitment:

- Job description reviewed for inclusive language
- Application process and forms being accessible (online and offline) (ensuring screen reader friendly, plain language and alternative formats available)
- Interview panel trained on accessibility
- Flexible interview formats available
- Reasonable accommodations offered upfront

Onboarding & Workplace Integration

Workplace integration and support for disabled employees are fundamental to building organisations where everyone can participate fully and bring out the best in themselves. As awareness of diverse access needs continues to grow, so does the responsibility to design systems, processes, and cultures that truly include disabled employees.

Employers play a critical role in designing systems, processes, and cultures that genuinely include disabled professionals, removing barriers and enabling everyone to thrive in the workplace. The Disability Act 2005 places a statutory obligation on public service providers to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities.

An integrated workplace:

- Is free from discrimination and harassment.
- Is welcoming to all employees, including those with disabilities.
- Recognises and values diversity among employees.
- Takes practical steps to achieve full equality.
- Creates a safe environment for employees to disclose any disabilities they might have.
- Includes Regular Check-ins & Feedback Loops

Key principles:

- Leadership and commitment at all levels.
- Accessibility by design in all processes.
- Equity in opportunity for recruitment, development, and progression.

Inclusive workplaces are more than just accessible processes—they thrive when employees feel socially and professionally supported. Initiatives such as mentorship programs, buddy systems, and staff awareness sessions help embed inclusion into the culture. Social inclusion activities—team lunches, interest groups, or volunteering projects—allow employees with diverse abilities to participate fully and build strong working relationships. Leadership modelling inclusive behaviours ensures these practices become part of the organisation's DNA, not just a checklist

Structured Onboarding

- **Clear role expectations** – Provide a written outline and discuss key priorities.
- **Named workplace buddy** – Assign a peer for guidance and social support.
- **Gradual task introduction** – Start small, build confidence, review progress.
- **Regular check-ins** – Short, structured meetings to adjust support and answer questions.
- **Accessibility & Workplace Supports** - Explain available accessibility features, assistive technology, emergency procedures, and how to request reasonable accommodations.
- **Reasonable Accommodation Information** - Ensure employees understand the accommodation process, who to contact, confidentiality arrangements, and review procedures.
- **Health & Safety Orientation** - Review emergency evacuation procedures, personal emergency evacuation plans (where required), workstation assessments, and any disability-related safety considerations.

Communication Supports

- **Clear written follow-up** – Summarise instructions in writing for clarity.
- **Visual schedules** – Use calendars, charts, or task boards to reduce confusion.
- **Defined supervision structure** – Ensure employees know who to go to for guidance.
- **Accessible digital tools** – Screen readers, Teams accessibility features, and other inclusive technology. (See page 20)

For practical guidance, check resources from the National Disability Authority, AHEAD, and the Employers for Change Toolkit / Enable Ireland.



Managers' guide to reasonable accommodation & equality responsibilities

What do managers need to know?

Managers play an important role in creating an inclusive workplace. You do not need to be an employment-law expert, but you do need to know how to respond appropriately when an employee discloses a disability, health condition or support need.

The **Employment Equality Act** protects against discrimination in employment on the disability ground and places obligations on employers in relation to appropriate measures for employees and job applicants with disabilities.

Your role is to **listen, respond appropriately, follow your organisation's process and seek advice when needed.**

1. When an employee discloses a disability or support need

A disclosure may happen formally or informally. An employee might tell you they have a disability, explain that something is affecting their work, or ask for a change to how they work.

As a manager:

- **Listen without judgement:** Thank the employee for raising the matter and allow them to explain what they need.
- **Don't make assumptions:** A diagnosis does not automatically tell you what support someone needs. Ask what would help them do their job effectively.
- **Respect confidentiality**: Information about an employee's disability or health should be handled sensitively and confidentially. Only share information with those who genuinely need to know and follow your organisation's confidentiality and data protection procedures.
- **Follow the organisation's process**: Know who to contact when a support or accommodation request is made — for example, HR, a designated inclusion lead or another appropriate person.
- **Keep communication open:** Agree how and when you will follow up. Support needs can change over time.



2. What is reasonable accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation, referred to in Irish equality legislation as **appropriate measures**, means taking appropriate steps to enable a person with a disability to access, participate in or progress in employment and training.

Reasonable accommodation is about **removing or reducing unnecessary barriers** that may prevent a person from carrying out their role effectively.

Depending on the individual and the role, this could include changes to:

- Working hours or patterns
- The way tasks or instructions are provided
- The way particular duties are carried out
- The physical or sensory work environment
- Equipment, technology or software
- Communication methods
- Recruitment or assessment processes
- Training or onboarding
- Workplace routines or supervision

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. The appropriate support will depend on the individual, their role and the workplace.

3. What should a manager do when support is requested?

A simple 5-step approach can help managers respond confidently and consistently:

1		**Listen –** Give the employee space to explain. Listen without judgement and allow them to describe what they are experiencing or what support they feel would help.
2		**Understand –** Focus on the workplace barrier. Consider what is making the task, environment or process difficult — rather than focusing solely on the person's diagnosis.
3		**Explore –** Discuss possible solutions. Work with the employee to explore practical options and involve HR or other appropriate supports where needed.
4		**Agree –** Confirm what will happen. Record what has been agreed, who is responsible and when the support will be put in place.
5		**Review –** Check that it is working. Follow up with the employee and ask whether the support is effective or needs to be adjusted.

Manager Tip:
You don't need to have all the answers. Your role is to listen, avoid assumptions, follow the organisation's process and seek advice when needed.

Practical ways managers can remove barriers

Managers are critical in making inclusion work. The following practical approaches can help employees navigate their work, understand expectations and participate effectively.

- **Clear written** follow-up: Summarise instructions, actions and agreed next steps in writing.
- **Visual schedules**: Use calendars, charts, task boards or other tools to support planning and reduce confusion.
- **Defined supervision structure**: Ensure employees know who to go to for guidance, support or questions.
- **Accessible digital tools**: Use accessibility features such as screen readers, captions, accessible documents and Microsoft Teams accessibility tools where appropriate.
- **Clear and accessible communication:** Provide information and instructions in different formats, such as written, visual or step-by-step guidance.
- **Flexible communication and supervision**: Consider whether an employee may benefit from clearer routines, additional check-ins, a consistent point of contact or more structured feedback.
- **Reasonable accommodation**: Know how to respond when an employee requests support or discloses a disability. Follow your organisation's process and involve HR or the appropriate support person where needed.
- **Know your responsibilities**: Managers should understand their role in supporting equality and reasonable accommodation under the Employment Equality Acts. They do not need to be legal experts, but they should know when to seek advice.

Reasonable Accommodation: Low-Cost Accommodations = High Impact

Many accommodations are **low-cost or no-cost**. Small changes to working arrangements, communication, equipment or the work environment can make a significant difference.

Examples include:

- **Flexible working arrangements**: Modified hours, hybrid or remote working, flexible start/finish times or part-time schedules.
- **Role or task adjustments**: Reassigning minor tasks, modifying how duties are carried out, or providing additional training and support.
- **Clear and accessible communication**: Providing information and instructions in different formats, such as written, visual or step-by-step guidance.
- **Workplace and environmental adjustments**: Ergonomic furniture, adapted workstations, quieter spaces, lighting or other sensory adjustments.
- **Assistive technology**: Screen readers, speech-to-text software, adapted keyboards, input devices or other accessibility tools.
- **Physical accessibility**: Ramps, accessible facilities or changes to the layout of the workplace where required.

***Key takeaway:** Even minor accommodations can cost little or nothing while making a significant difference to an employee's ability to work effectively**.**

Business Benefits:

Creating an inclusive workplace and removing unnecessary barriers can support:

- Higher productivity
- Better retention
- Lower absenteeism
- Stronger employee engagement
- Greater use of employees' skills and potential
- A more inclusive and supportive workplace culture

What Managers Should Avoid

- Don't make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do based on their disability or health condition.
- Don't ask unnecessary or intrusive questions about a diagnosis or personal circumstances.
- Don't promise a particular accommodation before following your organisation's process.
- Don't share personal information unnecessarily. Respect confidentiality and only share information with those who genuinely need to know.

If you are unsure, seek advice rather than making assumptions or delaying the conversation.

Sample Decision Process for Accommodations

Employee requests accommodation

Step 1 Manager acknowledges request confidentially

Step 2 Understand the barrier: task, environment, equipment or working arrangements

Step 3 Identify low-cost / no-cost solutions

Step 4 Consider grants or specialist support

Step 5 Implement accommodation

Step 6 Monitor effectiveness

Step 7 Review and adjust as needed

Common Barriers around Accommodations & How to Overcome Them:

Even in well-meaning workplaces, disabled employees may face barriers that limit participation. Identifying and addressing these obstacles is key to creating an inclusive environment.

Barrier	Examples	How to Overcome
Physical Barriers	Inaccessible entrances, workspaces, bathrooms, or equipment	Conduct accessibility checks, provide ramps, adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, and assistive technology; design new spaces with accessibility in mind
Communication Barriers	Meetings without captions, documents not in accessible formats, unclear instructions	Provide materials in multiple formats (large print, screen-reader friendly), offer captions, use dyslexia-friendly fonts such as Arial, give clear instructions
Cultural / Attitudinal Barriers	Unconscious bias, stereotypes, stigma, colleagues underestimating abilities	Provide disability awareness training, encourage open discussions, model inclusive behaviour from leadership
Procedural / Policy Barriers	Rigid recruitment processes, lack of flexible work options, unclear policies on adjustments	Review policies to be flexible and inclusive, make recruitment accessible, guide requesting reasonable adjustments
Remote/Hybrid Work Barriers	Limited access to technology or informal support	Ensure accessible tools, clear communication, and regular check-ins

Grants and Supports

There is a range of Government-funded grants and supports available to help employers recruit, support and retain employees with disabilities. These supports can help reduce workplace barriers and the costs associated with making workplaces more accessible and inclusive.

Supports may include workplace adaptations, workplace needs assessments, disability and inclusion training, specialised equipment and additional workplace support. Eligibility and application requirements vary depending on the support.

Work and Access

Work and Access is a range of supports designed to help reduce or remove barriers that may restrict a person with a disability from accessing, participating in or progressing in employment.

The scheme can support job candidates, employees, self-employed people and employers, depending on the individual support being accessed. Supports may include workplace adaptations, workplace needs assessments, disability and inclusion training, equipment and other assistance that enables people with disabilities to participate fully in work.

Employability Limerick can help employers understand what supports may be available, identify appropriate options and provide guidance through the process.

For the most up-to-date information, eligibility criteria and application details, visit Work and Access – gov.ie.

Key Grants & Supports

The following are some of the key grants and supports that may be relevant to employers. Eligibility, funding levels and application processes can change, so always check the current guidance before applying.

Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS)

The Wage Subsidy Scheme supports employers to hire people with a disability. It does this by giving employers financial support through a subsidy:

- The employer will be paid a subsidy towards employees' hourly rate
- The job must be for at least 15 hours a week but can be up to 39 hours a week
- The subsidy rate increases the more an employer hires using WSS
- Can continue long-term once eligibility remains

Best for:

Employers open to inclusive hiring, and want to undertake staff training and development to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace

Employability Support:

Help with application paperwork and ongoing job coaching and support for both employer and employee

Employability Limerick can help employers understand what supports may be available, identify appropriate options and provide guidance through the process.

Disability Equality and Inclusion Training (see Work and Access)

An employer can apply for funding to help pay for Disability Equality and Inclusion Training for their staff.

Best for:

Employers new to disability-inclusive employment or Teams that want practical guidance and reassurance

Employability Support:

Guidance on suitable training options and Support with the funding application process

Employability Limerick can help employers understand what supports may be available, identify appropriate options and provide guidance through the process.

Work Placement Experience Programme (WPEP)

The Work Placement Experience Programme (WPEP) provides short-term work placements for jobseekers who are unemployed or returning to the workforce. It gives individuals the opportunity to gain practical, hands-on experience in a real workplace, while employers benefit from extra support and the chance to develop potential future employees.

- Placements are usually up to 6 months in duration. Participants continue to receive their social welfare payment, and there is no obligation on the employer to offer a job at the end of the placement—though many use it as a stepping stone to recruitment.

Best for:

Employers who want to support talent development, try out potential candidates in a real work setting, and contribute to building work readiness in jobseekers.

Employability Support:

Assistance with programme setup, matching suitable candidates, and ongoing support throughout the placement for both employer and participant.

Employability Limerick can help employers understand what supports may be available, identify appropriate options and provide guidance through the process.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology includes any device, tool, or software that helps someone do their job more easily. It removes barriers for people with physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, or mental health needs — and many solutions are low-cost or already built into everyday devices.

Quick Examples:

- Screen readers and magnifiers
- Speech-to-text tools
- Ergonomic keyboards and chairs
- AT Hive (AHEAD resource for exploring tech solutions)

What Assistive Technology can help with

Assistive tools can support employees to:

- Read information more easily
- Write and take notes
- Stay organised and focused
- Communicate clearly
- Reduce physical strain
- Work safely and comfortably

Types of Assistive Technology

Visual Supports

- Screen readers (JAWS, NVDA, Voiceover)
- Screen magnifiers (ZoomText)
- Large print & high-contrast settings
- Braille displays

Hearing Supports

- Live captions and transcripts (online meetings)
- Hearing loop systems
- Visual or vibrating alerts

Cognitive & Neurodiverse Supports

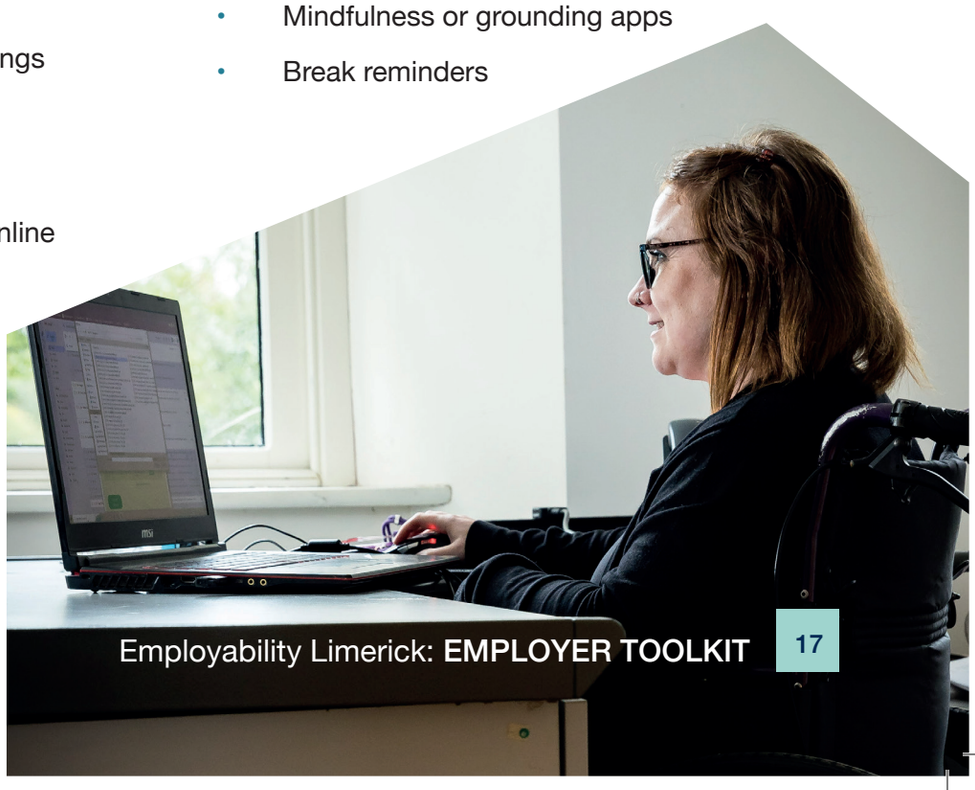
- Speech-to-text tools (e.g. Dragon, built-in dictation)
- Mind-mapping tools
- Reading & writing supports (text-to-speech, Immersive Reader, Grammarly)
- Task & reminder apps
- Focus tools (timers, distraction blockers)

Physical & Mobility Supports

- Ergonomic keyboards, mice & chairs
- Height-adjustable desks
- Voice-activated controls
- Alternative input devices (e.g. switches, head-tracking tools)

Mental Health & Wellbeing Supports

- Noise-cancelling headphones
- Quiet / low-sensory workspaces
- Soft lighting or screen filters
- Mindfulness or grounding apps
- Break reminders



Built in tools you already have

Many devices already include accessibility features. These are often enough for many employees.



AT Hive - An Assistive Technology Resource (AHEAD Resource)

AT Hive is an online resource created by AHEAD that explains different types of assistive technology in simple, clear language. The good thing about HIVE is that Employers can use Hive to explore options before buying equipment.

It includes:

- Short videos
- Examples of tools for reading, writing, organisation, and communication
- Guidance on choosing the right technology

**Refer to Page 15 Work and Access for information on workplace grants.

How to Introduce Assistive Technology at Work

A simple step-by-step approach can help employers identify the right assistive technology and support employees to use it effectively.

Five Steps to assist your Employees



Employability Limerick

Metrics & Reporting: Measuring Inclusion Success



INCLUSIVE PRACTICES | **POSITIVE IMPACT** | **MEASURE & REPORT** | **BETTER BUSINESS, BETTER SOCIETY**

GOOD FOR PEOPLE, GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Tracking inclusion helps employers understand what's working and where improvements are needed. Simple, measurable, and actionable metrics make this easy.

Key Metrics:

- Retention rates of employees with disabilities versus overall workforce
- Accommodation uptake – number and type of adjustments requested and implemented
- Employee satisfaction – surveys on inclusion, engagement, and workplace experience
- Recruitment diversity – percentage of applicants and hires with disabilities
- Absenteeism & presenteeism – monitor if accommodations reduce stress-related absences
- Participation in programs – e.g., wellness initiatives, peer support networks, training sessions

Tips for Reporting:

- Present metrics quarterly or biannually to leadership
- Use dashboards or visual charts for easy trend tracking
- Celebrate progress publicly within the organisation to reinforce inclusive culture



Leadership & Culture: Modelling Inclusion

Inclusive workplaces succeed when leaders actively demonstrate commitment and make inclusion part of everyday organisational culture.

Practical Strategies

These approaches can be adapted to the size and resources of your organisation. Inclusion does not always require significant investment — consistent leadership, practical actions and a willingness to listen can make a meaningful difference.

- **Lead by Example:** Participate in inclusion training, model respectful language and normalise workplace accommodations.
- **Keep Inclusion Visible:** Promote awareness through staff communications, team meetings, events and internal campaigns throughout the year — not just on awareness days.
- **Performance & Accountability:** Include relevant inclusion actions in manager objectives and review progress regularly.
- **Resource Inclusion:** Provide appropriate resources for accessibility, workplace supports, training and inclusive initiatives.
- **Celebrate Progress:** Recognise inclusive hiring, successful accommodations, employee networks and mentoring achievements.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Where appropriate, involve employees with disabilities in developing policies, processes and workplace initiatives.

Manager Tip:
Small, visible actions make a difference. Regularly recognising inclusive practices and talking about inclusion signals that it is part of the organisation's culture — not a one-off initiative.

CSR & Employability Partnerships

Inclusive employment can contribute to an organisation's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), ESG and wider community goals, while creating meaningful connections with local organisations and employment services.

Partnerships can help employers connect with talent, understand disability inclusion, access specialist expertise and strengthen community impact.

Key Connections

- **Build partnerships:** Connect with organisations such as Employability Limerick, AHEAD, Employers for Change, the National Disability Authority and other local or national disability organisations.
- **Create employment pathways:** Explore opportunities for recruitment, work experience, mentoring, job shadowing and other routes into employment.
- **Encourage employee involvement:** Support volunteering, mentoring and community engagement initiatives.
- **Share progress responsibly:** Where appropriate, include inclusive employment initiatives and outcomes within CSR, ESG or sustainability reporting.
- **Align with wider goals:** Consider how inclusive employment contributes to organisational people, social impact and ESG objectives.
- **Celebrate Inclusion:** Get involved in Employability Inclusion awards, celebrate your organisation's achievements, and share positive stories that showcase your commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) and creating an inclusive workplace.

Example: An employer might partner or collaborate with a local disability employment organisation to create a pathway from work experience or job shadowing into paid employment, while also providing employees with opportunities to volunteer or mentor.

Becoming an Employability Limerick Partner

Employability Limerick invites employers to become active partners in promoting inclusive employment. By partnering with us, you demonstrate your commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities and mental health challenges in the workplace.

Benefits of Partnership:

- Access to expert guidance on inclusive recruitment and retention.
- Support with reasonable accommodations and workplace adjustments.
- Assistance with accessing government grants and schemes.
- Participation in disability awareness training and events.
- Recognition as an inclusive employer in the Limerick region.

Ways to Collaborate:

- Host workplace visits or job trials for candidates.
- Share feedback and success stories.
- Engage in joint awareness campaigns and training sessions.
- Contribute to the development of inclusive employment initiatives.
- Become a Sponsor at the Employability Limerick Inclusion Awards

To become a partner or learn more, please visit www.EmployabilityLimerick.ie

Inclusion is strongest when it creates real opportunities — not simply good publicity.

Disability Profiling:

Mental Health and Wellbeing;

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all employees, including those with disabilities, is essential for creating a workplace where people feel valued, safe, and able to perform at their best. A proactive approach reduces stress, improves engagement, and fosters a culture of openness and understanding.

Reducing Stigma & Supporting Mental Health

Creating a mentally healthy workplace isn't just about policies—it's about culture. Reducing stigma and supporting open conversations encourages employees to seek help early and feel valued.

1. Stigma Reduction

- **Manager Training:** Provide workshops on unconscious bias in mental health to help managers recognise assumptions, avoid judgement, and respond supportively.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Share facts about mental health, challenge myths, and normalise discussions through newsletters, posters, or intranet content.
- **Lead by Example:** Encourage leaders to model openness about wellbeing, showing that seeking support is safe and accepted.
- **Confidentiality Practices:** Ensure employees know that disclosures are handled discreetly and supportively.

2. Practical Activities for All Employees

Activity	Purpose	Benefit
Lunch & Learn sessions	Mental health Awareness	Awareness, skill-building, and open dialogue
Peer support circles	Encourage mutual support	Builds connection, reduces isolation, normalises seeking help
Wellbeing challenges (steps, gratitude, hydration)	Promote healthy habits	Boosts engagement, morale, and team participation
Quiet / low-stimulus spaces	Provide calm environment	Supports focus, stress reduction, and sensory needs
Flexible work & wellness days	Allow time for self-care	Reduces burnout, improves productivity, supports retention

Supporting Employee Mental Health

The what and the how

WHAT (What You Can Do)	HOW (How to Do It)
1. Encourage open conversations about mental health	• Can be done in team meetings or check-ins • Encourage activities that improve mental health such as casual walking groups or coffee breaks • Make sure you provide a safe environment where employees feel comfortable
2. Provide access to Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs)	• Encourage employees to access • Put on noticeboard, intranet, and in onboarding materials
3. Promote work-life balance and the Right to Disconnect	• Make sure not to call employees outside of working hours • Do not expect them to answer emails • Set clear boundaries
4. Offer wellness resources or mental health days	• Provide mental health days • Organize activities such as retreats, mindfulness sessions, or regular walks • Even small, regular activities can make a big difference
5. Volunteer days for all employees	• Partner with charities or local organizations • Give employees a day to volunteer • Volunteering has positive effects on well-being and connection
6. Provide training on stress identification and coping skills	• Offer mental health awareness training • Provide Mental Health First Aid training • Equip employees with skills to recognize and manage stress
7. Using tools such as the timebox, weekly goal planners, or mind mapping	• Encourage use of productivity tools • Writing tasks down helps with focus, organization and mental clarity
8. Support healthy workload management	• Monitor workloads • Prioritize tasks and set realistic deadlines • Encourage breaks and prevent burnout
9. Allow flexible or hybrid working arrangements	• Offer flexible start/finish times • Support hybrid or remote work options • Focus on outcomes, not hours
10. Create quiet or low-stimulus spaces	• Provide acoustic pods or quiet rooms • Adjust lighting and reduce noise • Create spaces where employees can focus or reset
11. Peer support	• Set up a peer support network • Train peer supporters • Encourage a culture of listening and support
12. Create a comfortable environment	• Provide standing desks and ergonomic chairs • Accommodate individual needs • A comfortable environment helps employees feel valued and at ease

























When we support mental health, we build a healthier, happier and more productive workplace for everyone.



Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in how people think, learn, process information, and experience the world. This includes (but is not limited to) autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, Tourette syndrome, and other neurological differences. Neurodivergent employees bring valuable strengths—such as creativity, problem-solving, attention to detail, and innovative thinking—when workplaces are designed to support their needs.



Physical disability

Physical disabilities include mobility impairments, chronic pain conditions, sensory disabilities such as deafness or blindness, and other physical conditions that affect movement, stamina, or physical functioning. Creating an accessible physical and digital environment is essential to ensure employees can work comfortably and safely.



Resources & Tools

Templates & Practical Resources

Ready-to-use templates and practical tools can save time, support consistency and help employers build more inclusive recruitment and employment practices.

Rather than reinventing resources that are already available, we signpost employers to trusted organisations such as CIPD and Employers for Change, where you can find a range of templates, checklists, guides and practical resources covering areas such as:

- Inclusive job descriptions and recruitment
- Workplace accommodation and reasonable adjustments
- Inclusive interviewing and selection
- Onboarding and supporting new employees
- Inclusive workplace policies and practices

Explore the resources available from these organisations and choose the tools that best fit your workplace, team and recruitment needs.

Mental Health & Disability Support Organisations (Local & National)

Limerick-Based Supports:

Mental Health & Crisis Supports	
Limerick Mental Health Association (LMHA)	https://limerickmentalhealth.ie
The Haven Hub (Limerick)	https://havenhub.ie
Adapt Domestic Abuse Service (Limerick)	https://adaptservices.ie

Disability & Community Supports	
Enable Ireland Limerick	https://enableireland.ie
Avista (Limerick)	https://avista.ie
Limerick Independent Living	https://limerickcil.com
Limerick Disabilities Directory	https://www.limerick.ie/discover/living/in-your-community/community-services/people-with-disabilities/browse

Employment & Inclusion Supports	
Employability Limerick	https://www.Employabilitylimerick.ie

Wellbeing, Sport & Social Inclusion	
Limerick Sports Partnership	https://limericksports.ie
FlexiTime	https://flexitime.ie

Neurodiversity Supports	
Mid-West ADD/ADHD Support Group (Limerick) – via INCADDS	https://www.incadds.ie/support-groups.html
National Supports:	
Employability Service	https://www.gov.ie/Employability
Citizens Information	https://www.citizensinformation.ie
National Disability Authority	https://www.nda.ie
Workplace Relations Commission	https://www.workplacerelations.ie
Department of Social Protection	https://www.gov.ie/dsp
Disability Federation of Ireland	https://www.disability-federation.ie
HSE Disability Services	https://www.hse.ie

Mental Health Supports	
Mental Health Ireland – Workplace Mental Health Survey	https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/MHI-2025-Research_-Key-Findings.pdf
(Healthy Workplace Ireland / UCC report on Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing)	https://www.ucc.ie/en/srerc/research/healthyworkplaceireland/
Aware	https://www.aware.ie
Pieta	https://www.pieta.ie
Samaritans Ireland	https://www.samaritans.org/ireland
Text 50808 – Text About It	https://text50808.ie
MyMind	https://mymind.org
Grow Mental Health	https://grow.ie
Shine	https://shine.ie
BetterHelp – Online Therapy	https://www.betterhelp.com
Turn2Me	https://turn2me.ie
Jigsaw (Youth Mental Health)	https://jigsaw.ie

HSE Supports	
HSE Mental Health Supports	https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health

Wellbeing & Self-Help Apps	
Insight Timer – Meditation App	https://insighttimer.com/

Workplace Mental Health Programmes	
Aware – Wellness@Work Programme	https://www.aware.ie/programmes/wellness-work/
AHEAD – Workplace Wellness, Wellness Action Plan & AT Hive	https://www.ahead.ie/workplacewellness

Disability Supports	
National Advocacy Service (NAS)	https://www.advocacy.ie
Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)	https://www.disability-federation.ie
Irish Wheelchair Association	https://www.iwa.ie
Headway Ireland (Brain Injury Supports)	https://headway.ie
MS Ireland	https://www.ms-society.ie
Vision Ireland (formerly NCB National Council for the Blind of Ireland)	https://vi.ie
Chime – Ireland's National Charity for Deaf & Hard of Hearing People	https://www.chime.ie

Neurodiversity Supports	
Irish Society for Autism	https://autism.ie
Neurodiversity Ireland	https://www.neurodiversityireland.com
Middletown Centre for Autism – Educational and family support (Ireland + NI)	https://www.middletownautism.com/
ASD Ireland	https://www.asdireland.ie
INCADDS – National ADHD Support Network	https://www.incadds.ie/support-groups.html
Dyslexia Ireland (Dyslexia Association of Ireland)	https://dyslexia.ie

Employer Grants & Supports	
Work and access	https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-social-protection/services/work-and-access/

Disability Awareness: Key Dates & Opportunities

A practical resource supporting year-round inclusion, highlighting key disability awareness dates and themes that can inform CSR activity, staff engagement, and awareness campaigns. It promotes a consistent, proactive approach to embedding disability awareness in workplace culture. These dates can provide opportunities to start conversations, share information, recognise important campaigns and promote a culture of inclusion. Sharing relevant activities externally can also help raise awareness and showcase your organisation's commitment to inclusion.

Month	Theme	Core Actions (For Workplaces)
January	Mental Health Awareness	Promote Employee Assistance Programme (EAP); deliver a wellbeing toolbox talk
February	Disability History Month (Ireland)	Provide staff disability awareness briefing; review recruitment language for bias
March	Developmental Disabilities / World Down Syndrome Day	Partner with supported employment services; promote inclusive team culture activity
April	Autism Acceptance	Review interview process (share questions in advance); ensure clear onboarding information
May	Accessibility & Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD)	Conduct accessibility check (physical or digital); ensure documents use plain language
June	Deafblind Awareness	Promote alternative communication methods; use accessible formats (captions, visuals)
July	Disability Pride	Celebrate disability success stories; promote disability confidence awareness
August	Inclusion Planning Month	Set inclusive recruitment or accessibility goals for Q4; plan awareness training
September	Alzheimer's Awareness / Sign Languages Day	Promote clear communication standards; support dementia-friendly awareness
October	Disability Employment Awareness Month	Run inclusive hiring activity; promote accessible recruitment practices
November	Disability Awareness Month (Ireland)	Host internal awareness activity; share inclusion policy with staff
December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Review annual inclusion progress; gather staff feedback



Employability Limerick

If you have a vacancy in your organisation that you wish to fill or would like to find out more about the service we offer, we would love for you to get in touch! Even if you are not recruiting right now, you can still get involved in helping us promote inclusive workplace practices. We look forward to hearing from you.

5 Mallow Street, Limerick, V94 FE8H

061 493095

www.facebook.com/employab

www.linkedin.com/in/Employability-limerick

www.instagram.com/Employabilitylimerick

Website: www.employabilitylimerick.ie