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**Inclusive Futures**

Promoting disability inclusion

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## Including People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace:

### A Guide for Employers

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## Foreword



My name is Mark Mapemba. I am a self-advocate, I am a father, and I am the Vice-President of Inclusion International.

Inclusion International believes in real jobs for real pay. This means people with intellectual disabilities having jobs they choose, in their community, paid equally for their work.

For us, work is important because everyone needs to financially support themselves to survive, including people with intellectual disabilities.

Working in inclusive workplaces also helps make our communities more inclusive, because when we interact with companies, they will understand more about intellectual disability.

But for people with intellectual disabilities, it is very hard to get a job.

In my experience, to find and apply for a job is very challenging. One of the reasons is that we do not always have papers or formal education, so it is harder for us to get a job. I have experience and have been in my field for a long time, but without the papers, getting a job is a big challenge.

It is also a challenge for us to get employment because many employers do not trust us, or they assume that we will underperform. They assume this even when we might be better at the job than people without disabilities.

Business want productivity, and if they haven't worked with us before they might feel that we are not capable of doing the kind of work that they do. But we can work, and we want to work.

This guide for employers will help because right now employers do not have the knowledge to include people with intellectual disabilities at work.

With these guidelines, they will understand that that they *can* work with us, and they will have the knowledge about how to include people with intellectual disabilities in their workplaces.

Mark Mapemba  
Vice-President  
Inclusion International



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# Introduction

As employers around the world have begun to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and build more diverse workforces, many marginalized groups have continued to be left behind. Despite the will and skills to work, people with intellectual disabilities have historically been excluded from the workforce, and DEI initiatives have not yet made meaningful inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the workforce a priority. This exclusion results in further exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, and denies employers access to a group of prospective employees that can make real contributions to their workplaces.

For many employers, including people with intellectual disabilities in a workplace is seen as a daunting task. In consultations with businesses and organisations from a diverse array of industries, employers shared that they wouldn't know how to support an employee with an intellectual disability if they did hire someone, and that their concerns about the potential costs of reasonable accommodations are a major impediment to opening up their workplace to people with intellectual disabilities.

Contrary to common misconceptions, most of the strategies for making a workplace more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities are free and able to be implemented without outside expertise. Creating a workplace that is more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities primarily requires small tweaks and behaviour changes within a workplace that make it easier for everyone to understand and be included in work.

Ultimately, workplaces that are designed to be more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities are better for *all* employees – the additional flexibility, clearer communication, access to support, and inclusive culture are value adds that also makes the work of employees without intellectual disabilities easier and attracts new talent to a company through being a better place to work. Supportive workplaces that are responsive to the needs of employees benefit everyone.

For workplaces to become more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities, employers need practical guidance and support that outlines steps to take to work towards inclusion. This guidance for employers was informed by consultations with employers about what support and information they want and need to take inclusion forward, as well as consultations with people with intellectual disabilities themselves on what employers can do to make sure they can be meaningfully included in workplaces.

This resource breaks down key reflection questions for businesses and organisations looking to make their work more inclusive of employees with intellectual disabilities. It provides clear and concrete recommendations for primarily free and easy actions that the employer can take to create a more inclusive workplace.

The guidance is broken down into sections that reflect different areas of a business or organisation's work and management structure. The guidance details **how** to work towards inclusion across those areas. Employers can find clear guidance on accessible recruitment, hiring, communication, policy work, and more. The how-to section is followed by a toolkit section, which provides templates and useful resources for employers to implement in their workplaces.

# HOW-TO: INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

The following section, broken down into eight (8) sections, gives employers practical guidance on the steps to make their work more inclusive.

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## Section 1 - Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Creating a culture of inclusion within a workplace is both the starting point and the end goal for workplaces looking to meaningfully include people with intellectual disabilities.

Beginning the journey to inclusion with a reflection on workplace culture helps put enabling conditions in place within a business or organisation to make the work environment more responsive to the needs of its current and future employees, both with and without intellectual disabilities.

From thinking about the policy environment to setting the stage for inclusive hiring to ensuring support at work – reflecting on what works and what needs to shift to ensure a fully inclusive workplace moving forwards helps businesses ensure not only that their first hires with intellectual disabilities will be well included, but that all employees experience a more supportive work environment.

Reflecting on what an inclusive work culture means from the earliest stages is essential because people with intellectual disabilities report that even if all of the support is in place in a workplace, exclusion can still happen if their colleagues are not brought along on the journey towards inclusion. Bullying, harassment, and exclusion from co-workers remains a significant issue for people with intellectual disabilities around the world.

Building an inclusive culture sets the groundwork for ensuring that everyone, including people with intellectual disabilities, can meaningfully participate at work. Although this is the first stage in working towards a more inclusive workplace, work to ensure the culture of the workplace is inclusive does not stop when employees with intellectual disabilities come on board. Inclusion is a journey, and businesses and organisations will continue to build towards full inclusion on an ongoing basis alongside their employees with intellectual disabilities as an underlying goal across their work.

When working to shift your workplace culture towards inclusion, think about:

**Levels of commitment**

*At what level within the business or organisation are commitments to inclusion being made?*

Often, HR departments or high-level management make commitments to disability inclusion, but this does not always filter down to all levels of the business.

For inclusion to be successful, buy-in at all levels is necessary. If the drive for inclusion is top-down, think about what steps need to be taken to bring employees at all levels on board, and how this can be best communicated.

## Building understanding

*Where are your employees on their inclusion journey, and what support will they need to start contributing to inclusion?*

For many employees within a workplace, it may be the case that they have never met a person with an intellectual disability before.

Those who have never met a person with an intellectual disability may have hesitation about interacting with them or may feel like they don't know "how to act," which results in employees with intellectual disabilities being and feeling excluded.

What training or support might be needed for those employees to ensure that they are comfortable and welcoming of employees with intellectual disabilities?

### Take Action on Building an Inclusive Culture

To take action on ensuring the culture within the workplace is inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities and to set the stage for future inclusive hires:

- ✓ **Go back to basics** Helping everyone in the business understand that people with intellectual disabilities have a right to employment and can bring value to their workplaces must be starting point.

For employees who may never have met or worked with a person with an intellectual disability before, start from the beginning.

Sharing [resources on ensuring respectful interactions with people with intellectual disabilities](#) may be a good place to start to make employees feel more confident meeting a new team member with an intellectual disability.

- ✓ **Provide training on inclusion and good support** There may be an appetite from employees for additional training on inclusion and good support, particularly on teams where a person with an intellectual disability may work or interact with often.

The most impactful training on inclusion and good support is typically training delivered by people with intellectual disabilities themselves. Self-advocacy organisations or other organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) representing people with intellectual disabilities and their families often have existing training on these topics that can be delivered in workplaces. Training delivered by OPDs also gives employees a chance to ask questions directly to the experts themselves - people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

✓ **Make good support a shared responsibility**

Although one person within the organisation will likely be the primary supporter for an employee with an intellectual disability, all employees need to have an understanding of good support and know how to recognize and call out bad support.

Ensuring that everyone gets the support they need to succeed is a shared responsibility that everyone in a workplace needs to be invested in.

Sharing [guidance on good support](#) with employees or arranging for training on good support led by OPDs is often a good place to start.

✓ **Role model inclusion at the highest level**

Shifting a workplace culture to be more inclusive will take time, but role modelling plays a huge role in aiding the transition. Upper management and those in very visible roles within a workplace need to lead by example and role model inclusion.

A CEO using easy to understand language and accessible PowerPoint slides in a presentation to employees or others in upper management shifting to using plain language email communications when they contact their employees will show everyone both the expectations for more accessible work and will make it clear that there is buy-in for inclusion at all levels.

✓ **Provide additional training for managers**

On a day-to-day level, managers will likely be responsible for ensuring that inclusion is happening in practice.

Managers will need to monitor how inclusion is being implemented in their team across different areas of the work – from ensuring that team meetings are happening in a way that everyone can understand to ensuring that no one is left out when the team goes for an after-work drink or bite to eat.

Managers need to be champions for inclusion and be the leaders in supporting their teams to work and socialize more inclusively – ensure they have the training and support from others within the organisation to do this effectively.

✓ **Zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, and exclusion**

People with intellectual disabilities report that bullying and harassment from co-workers is one of the biggest barriers to keeping a job in an inclusive workplace. Set the standard within the workplace that bullying, harassment, and exclusion are not tolerated. This should be entrenched in policy documents and communicated openly to all employees.

All employees, including employees with intellectual disabilities, need to have a clear understanding of where to go for support if they are being bullied or harassed at work.

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## Section 2 - Identifying Roles

For businesses or organisations that want to include people with intellectual disabilities in their workforce for the first time, the first goal of a human resources team is often identifying where an employee with an intellectual disability will best fit in at their company.

Stereotypes and assumptions about what a person with an intellectual disability can or cannot do often influence the roles that businesses make available to applicants with disabilities.

For example, businesses hiring people with intellectual disabilities for the first time often assume that an employee with an intellectual disability is capable of a cleaning role but not an office administration role, or capable of stocking shelves but not being part of a project management team. These incorrect assumptions result in businesses limiting the diversity of their applicants, and denying themselves access to the unique skillsets of potential employees.

Businesses are often tempted to create a new role specifically for a person with an intellectual disability. A common way of doing this is by taking small (usually administrative) tasks from the job descriptions of other existing staff and adding them together to create a new job description for a person with an intellectual disability. This is called job carving, and tends to result in jobs with low job satisfaction and poor staff retention.

To build a vision for where employees with intellectual disabilities can fit into your company's structure, think about:

**Meaningful tasks** *Does the role you are considering hiring a person with an intellectual disability into meaningfully contribute to the company's work?*

All roles within a company should be making an active contribution to helping the company run day-to-day, from the lowest level within the company through upper management. Unfortunately, when companies begin hiring people with intellectual disabilities, often they aim for filling roles that they see as "easy" or creating roles made up of make-work tasks.

If this is type of role you envision for an employee with an intellectual disability, think about your motivation for hiring. Aiming to create easy roles specifically for people with intellectual disabilities tends to be rooted in the idea of charity, and isn't in line with the goal of ensuring that every employee is making a meaningful contribution to the company.

**Job satisfaction** *Would both an employee with an intellectual disability and an employee without an intellectual disability perform well in and get satisfaction from the role?*

If the job is a role that you expect someone without an intellectual disability would not want to do, reflect on whether or not the tasks and the work are meaningful.

If employees without disability would not be interested in the role, an employee with an intellectual disability likely wouldn't either.

## Advancement opportunities

*What would job growth look like in the role?*

When people with intellectual disabilities are hired in the private sector, often the only opportunities provided to them are roles without a clear path for advancement or growth in the role. People with intellectual disabilities are less likely to be given opportunities for advancement and are often expected by managers to stay in the same role and at the same level for the duration of their career with a company.

If your employees without an intellectual disability working at the same level have the opportunity for their roles to evolve over time or for promotion and job advancement, ensure that the roles that people with intellectual disabilities occupy in the company will have the same opportunities.

## Take Action for Inclusive Job Identification

When looking at how to begin including people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace, take action to:

✓ **Ensure that *all* jobs are open to all candidates**

Breaking free of hiring driven by stereotypes means setting the standard within the Human Resources team that all jobs within the company are open to all candidates.

When looking to diversify your employees and include people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace, don't look through the company's vacancies and identify specific roles that would be "suitable" for someone with an intellectual disability. Instead, applicants with intellectual disabilities should be encouraged to apply for roles within all levels of the company.

A statement on all job postings that indicates people with disabilities and people with varied education levels and experiences are encouraged to apply is one mechanism for taking this forward.

✓ **Avoid job carving**

Hire people with intellectual disabilities into roles that actively contribute to the work of the company, not roles that have been created specifically for people with intellectual disabilities.

Roles made up of small tasks other employees do not want to do or made up of tasks that are seen as "easy" or "less

important” results in less meaningful work, which creates low job satisfaction and poor employee retention.

✓ **Be willing to consider adaptations**

When thinking about the roles that people with intellectual disabilities may apply for in the company, think about spaces where other colleagues could support or collaborate with an employee with intellectual disability in certain parts of their role, or how support and adjustments could allow a person to succeed in a role.

Ensure that throughout the recruitment process, the recruitment team thinks creatively about how potential employees could be supported to do the job.

✓ **Ensure all roles are paid in line with the standard pay bands**

Many people with intellectual disabilities are offered jobs at wages or salaries that are significantly less than what a person without an intellectual disability doing the same job would earn. In some countries, people with intellectual disabilities are offered wages as low as one tenth of what a person without a disability is paid – this is discrimination.

Ensure that all roles within the same company are aligned with the same pay band, and that there is no wage or salary gap between people with intellectual disabilities and other employees performing the same job functions.

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## Section 3 - Accessible Recruitment

When a business has never had an applicant with an intellectual disability apply to work with them, it is easy to assume that a lack of applicants means that there is no demand from people with intellectual disabilities to join the workplace. Typically, a lack of applicants with intellectual disabilities is a result of inaccessible recruitment practices – not a lack of interest.

To understand why people with intellectual disabilities are not applying for jobs at your company, is important to think about *why* this may be the case. Think about:

**Communications** *Is information about what your company does and the kind of positions available in your workforce accessible to everyone?*

If your website uses complex language or menus that are difficult to navigate, people with intellectual disabilities may struggle to access information about what you do or the roles you have available. Similarly, if your job descriptions available online are not in plain language, applications from people with intellectual disabilities will be unlikely.

**Educational Requirements** *Does your company have a baseline educational requirement for job applicants that are required for all positions?*

Many companies require that all employees must have a secondary school diploma or a bachelor's degree. When listed as a standard part of a company's job description templates, these educational requirements end up being required for many positions that can be performed successfully without these qualifications. For people with intellectual disabilities who face barriers to accessing education and are less likely to have these qualifications, strict educational requirements may prevent them for applying to a job they would otherwise be a successful candidate for. Think about which jobs in your organisations *really* require higher education and where an equivalent level of life experience or other skills would be sufficient.

**Application Format** *What format are your company's job applications in?*

The accessibility of the process that you ask candidates to go through to apply for a role can be a major barrier for people with intellectual disabilities - if application processes are not available in plain language and easily navigable, the diversity of applicants your company is open to will be limited. It is also important to consider the role that technology plays in your applications – with most job postings available online with accompanying online application forms, this may limit access to people with intellectual disabilities, who are less likely to have access to technology. If your company does not provide alternative application routes, such as applying by phone or in-person, technology may be a barrier for candidates.

## Recruitment Platforms

*Where does your organisation advertise for jobs?*

For companies that advertise their roles on external platforms, consider the accessibility of those platforms. If the recruitment platform is difficult to access and navigate, people with intellectual disabilities will not be able to access your postings. Similarly, it is worth considering what type of applicant your recruitment platforms cater to. For example, if your company limited your job advertisements to platforms like LinkedIn that are primarily used by people with formal sector work experience and degrees, prospective applicants with intellectual disabilities are less likely to see and apply for the role.

## Exclusionary Software

*Does your company use human resources software that filters out CVs and applicants before they reach your team?*

Many companies use recruitment software to filter applications in order to make the number of applications received more manageable for the recruitment team. Filtering software often uses keyword matching to identify applicants who use specific language or words in their CVs that align with the job description or the company's values. Often the keywords used for filtering are technical language or jargon, which can filter out candidates who have relevant experience that they described using more accessible language. For example, a jobseeker applying for a facilitation role with a CV describing their previous experience "running meetings for people to share their ideas" might be filtered out by software for not using the words "focus group" in their application.

## Aptitude Testing

*Does your company use forms of aptitude testing as part of the application process?*

Psychometric testing has become a standard practice within many HR departments, but these tests are discriminatory to people with disabilities. The design of these tests is inaccessible, and they tend not to be flexible or suited to reasonable accommodation, which has been at the centre of recent court rulings against businesses regarding the use of psychometric testing for candidates with disabilities. Prospective job candidates with intellectual disabilities would be dissuaded from applying to jobs that put candidates through any form of psychometric or aptitude testing.

## Take Action for Inclusive Recruitment

Once companies have identified the barriers that are preventing people with intellectual disabilities from applying for jobs, the next step is taking action to create more accessible and inclusive recruitment systems:

- ✓ **Ensure that job requirements fit the role** While some professional roles will always require specific educational certificates or qualifications (e.g. law, accountancy), many roles within a company that are advertised as requiring

specific certificates or degrees in practice can be successfully performed without those educational backgrounds.

Create a review process for your HR team to evaluate job requirements for new roles and new hires. The new strategy for identification of job requirements should be based on the skills that a candidate needs to succeed in a job, but should not identify a specific place where the candidate needed to acquire those skills. Update your job description templates to remove unnecessary references to educational requirements in favour of descriptions of skills required.

✓ **Revise job descriptions templates**

Job descriptions are often vague, use jargon, and don't give the applicants a clear idea of what they would do in the role. Revise your template job descriptions to use plain language and to give clear examples of the type of work the employee might do in a typical day at work. Ensure the formatting is also easy to read – double space your lines and use large text (font size 16 is typically standard for plain language documents).

Use our [sample accessible job description](#) as guidance!

✓ **Re-think application processes**

Consider the formats that you use to collect job applications - while most companies tend to rely on standardized application forms, there are more accessible ways to collect the same information. For example, providing some question prompts in plain language and asking candidates to respond to them in a video format will give the HR Manager access to the same key information from a cover letter and CV, but will make applying for the role more accessible for candidates who have difficulty navigating inaccessible recruitment platforms and application forms. Question prompts should be short, simple, and in plain language.

For example:

To apply for this job, please send us a video of you telling us about yourself. The video should explain:

- What job you want to apply for
- Why you want this job
- What skills you have that will help you do this job
- If you have ever done work like this before
- Why you think you would be good at this job

The video should be shorter than 10 minutes.

Email your video to [hr@mybusiness.com](mailto:hr@mybusiness.com) to apply.

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If application forms are the primary way you collect job applications, revise your standard job application to ensure that it is accessible to everyone. Ensure that the form is easy to navigate, the questions are in plain language, and that there are clear instructions about where candidates should go for help if they are having difficulty with the form.

- ✓ **Build flexibility into your application process** Create alternatives for applicants who may have difficulty applying through your standard application process, and explicitly note that these other options exist on your job postings. People without regular access to technology, those with poor connectivity, and others who prefer alternative formats should have the option to apply by phone, in-person, using video, or using other methods.
- ✓ **Eliminate aptitude testing from your application process** Psychometric tests are discriminatory to people with intellectual disabilities. Recruitment systems that are inclusive of people with disabilities do not use forms of aptitude testing.
- ✓ **Seek applicants outside of traditional platforms** Traditional online job search platforms can be difficult to navigate and are rarely designed with accessibility in mind.

Advertise your jobs using a combination of traditional and non-traditional platforms, including social media, and do direct outreach to find candidates from marginalized groups who may not otherwise have found your job posting.

This may mean reaching out to other community organisations for referrals, including organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) that represent people with intellectual disabilities.
- ✓ **Collect data on disability** During your application process, collect information about disability which can help you understand who your job postings are still not reaching and what communities your postings may be inaccessible to. Use this data to make your recruitment more accessible – do not connect disability disclosures during the application process to individual applicants without their consent.
- ✓ **Include people with intellectual disabilities in designing new recruitment systems** People with intellectual disabilities and their families are the experts in both barriers to inclusion at work and the strategies for improving access to work. Hire consultants with intellectual disabilities to review your recruitment practices, identify barriers, and give you guidance on how your system could be more accessible and easier to use for everyone.

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## Section 4 - Accessible Interviewing

Generally, businesses rely on formal interviews as the best way to gauge a potential employee's success in a role.

Interview questions typically are not provided in advance, the conversations often use technical language and jargon, and for many candidates (both with and without disabilities), job interviews do not necessarily end up being a good reflection of how successful a candidate will be in a role. Strategies that make interview processes more inclusive often end up leading to more effective and efficient interview stages!

To think about how your company can best gauge if a person will be successful in a role, think about:

**Is the ability to think on your feet a core requirement of the role?**

*Is how quickly a candidate can think of a relevant example from their background something that is necessary for their future work?*

Typically, interviewers do not give candidates a clear sense in advance of the questions they will be asked in an interview.

In most roles, the ability to answer questions quickly isn't a core task that employees will be doing day-to-day, and their ability to quickly identify examples from their past has no bearing on their future job performance.

While there is a value in meeting candidates face-to-face before making hiring decisions and talking to them about their backgrounds, for most jobs, there is no reason why candidates shouldn't be able to prepare for this conversation in advance.

**Asking the right questions**

*Do all of the questions you would normally ask in an interview actually demonstrate success in the role?*

Businesses will often have standard job interview script with a number of questions that are not specific to the job at hand.

Common examples are hypothetical situations where candidates are asked to explain how they would proceed or behave in response to a challenge in the workplace, even if they would never be expected to handle that situation alone without the support or advice of their colleagues should that situation occur.

Questions that candidates are asked in interviews should relate directly to their relevant experience and day-to-day work, not abstract situations that will likely not be reflected in their role. Sticking to relevant questions will make the interviews a better use of the recruitment team and the candidate's time.

**Is conversation the right way to demonstrate future success?**

*Can the skills required for day-to-day work in the role be accurately reflected through conversation? Are there other ways to identify future success?*

Particularly for more hands-on roles, a formal interview may not be the best way to determine if someone will succeed in the role. Interviews rely on a traditional communication format which is not fully inclusive of people with communication barriers and does not allow all candidates to demonstrate how they can be successful in a role.

Job try-outs, where instead of an interview with the recruiter the candidate gets an introduction to some of the day-to-day tasks and demonstrates how they could do those tasks, are an alternative model that some companies have found to be successful.

**Essential vs. learnable skills**

*Which skills are essential for candidates to already know, and which can be learned on the job?*

Recruiters are looking for candidates with relevant backgrounds, but do not necessarily expect that candidates will have experience in every part of the role.

Often during the interview phase, this same courtesy is not extended to people with intellectual disabilities. Candidates with intellectual disabilities often find themselves excluded from consideration if there are tasks or parts of a role that they would need to learn once in the job. Learning on the job is standard practice for new employees, and all new hires (with and without disabilities) experience an element of learning on the job alongside their colleagues when starting a new role.

If a person with an intellectual disability cannot point to a specific previous experience in a relevant area during the interview stage, this should not be a disqualifying factor. Employers must be as open to employees with intellectual disabilities learning on the job as they are to employees without intellectual disabilities doing the same.

Take Action for Inclusive Interviewing

Standard practice for job interviews is typically an inaccessible process, but small tweaks can make the process more inclusive and accessible for all candidates.

To take action to create more accessible and inclusive recruitment systems:

- ✓ **Provide the interview questions in advance** Most jobs do not require employees to immediately know the answers to a question without being able to double check or speak to their colleagues, so interviews do not need to ask jobseekers to demonstrate this skill.

For people with intellectual disabilities, providing the questions that interviewees will be asked in advance means that jobseekers will be able to prepare for the interview in advance and ensure that they are equipped to share all of their relevant experience on interview day.

Giving people sufficient time to think and prepare is a form of reasonable accommodation, and this should also be extended to the interview process! Two weeks in advance for preparation is best practice.

The interview questions should be provided in an accessible format, which for people with intellectual disabilities typically means easy to understand language, double spacing, bullet points instead of large paragraphs, and a larger font.

✓ **Eliminate jargon**

Interview questions are often vague, use jargon, and don't give the applicants a clear idea of what the interviewer is trying to gauge by asking the question.

During an interview, the questions that the interviewer asks (and by extension, the copy of the questions that were provided in advance) should be written in plain language. Plain language writing uses language that is easier for everyone to understand and engage with.

Use our [sample plain language interview questions](#) for an example of how to do this!

✓ **Eliminate hypothetical situation-based questions**

Hypothetical situational questions that require abstract thinking and which are not rooted in actual skills and experiences can be challenging for people with intellectual disabilities to engage with.

Examples include “*what would do you if...*” or “*how would you react when...*” type questions.

They also typically are not indicative of what would happen in practice if that situation occurred in the workplace. If the company wouldn't expect the jobseeker to deal with that hypothetical issue in isolation without seeking support or advice from their co-workers should a challenging situation arise, then there is no need to ask about it in an interview.

The expected responses to these challenging issues also tend to be directly related to a company's standards of practice or workplace culture – there is likely already an established way of handling difficult situations (who to talk to, how to proceed) within the company that new employees will learn on the job.

The answers to these questions often don't add significant value to an interview, and are discriminatory to people with intellectual disabilities and others who face difficulty with abstract thinking.

✓ **Ensure access to support**

The support or form of reasonable accommodation that people with disabilities need varies from person to person, and this is also true of people with intellectual disabilities.

One form of support that many people with intellectual disabilities access when going through a job application process is support from a personal assistant or support person. When reaching out to arrange an interview, ask if the candidate will be bringing a support person, and ensure that the support person is allowed in the interview room. Support persons may help a jobseeker with an intellectual disability in an interview by clarifying questions that are not in simple enough language or supporting people with identifying examples from their background that they can speak about to demonstrate skills and experiences.

It is also important to remember that people with intellectual disabilities intersect with all other identities as well, so additional supports may be needed – for example, a person with an intellectual disability who was also deaf may need sign language interpretation in addition to easy to understand interview questions.

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## Section 5 - Accessible Hiring & Orientation

Once a person with an intellectual disability has successfully gone through a recruitment and interview process, companies will need to reflect on their internal hiring procedures to ensure the process is accessible.

Hiring processes require both legal mechanisms like job contracts, and an orientation (also called training or onboarding), both of which need to be delivered in a way that is accessible.

When bringing successful applicants into your team, think about:

### **Delivering orientation or training**

*How does training for new employees happen in practice?*

Does new employee training consist of the new employees reviewing internal documents or participating in online training modules? Reflect on how the process has been designed and elements that might be inaccessible, such as providing too much information at once without time to think and reflect, or processes that are entirely self-managed without support or opportunities to ask questions.

If there is no procedure for orientation and managers prepare it on a case-by-case basis, consider setting some standards so that no new employees fall through the cracks.

### **Language**

*Are training/orientation materials in an accessible language?*

Policies, procedures, training, and any new information that companies are sharing with a new employee with an intellectual disability should be in plain language.

Policies written in legal language will need to be made accessible to make it easier for all employees to engage with the content.

### **Essential vs. non-essential information**

*What level of information is actually needed before a new employee's first day?*

Many companies will use large training packages which include all of the company's policies and procedures, with the expectation that new hires will review the written information about how the company works before or on their first day. This can be overwhelming for all employees.

Often much of this information is superfluous – does a new employee really need to review the health and safety procedures which details the internal steps the human resources team takes when an incident is reported to them, or is information about who to report a workplace health and safety issue to and the employee's rights in the case of an incident all that an employee outside of the HR team needs? Consider what information is actually essential.

## Take Action for Inclusive Hiring

Changes that a company makes to their hiring and orientation process make the workplace more accessible for all new employees, not solely people with intellectual disabilities.

To take action to create more accessible hiring processes:

- ✓ **Ensure job contracts are in plain language**

Employment contracts are typically long, complicated, and full of legal jargon. In addition to standard contracts being inaccessible to people with intellectual disabilities, they are also difficult to read and understand for all employees!

Employees cannot be expected to sign a document that they do not understand, which means that contracts must be in plain language so that they are accessible to new hires with intellectual disabilities and any other employees without a legal background.

Plain language contracts should not only be used for employees with an intellectual disability, when contract renewals happen or when other new hires without intellectual disabilities are brought on board, everyone should be signing plain language contracts.

Use our [sample plain language contract](#) as a template!
- ✓ **Review contract terms with the new employee**

Sending a legal document to a new hire without a conversation, even if that document is in plain language, is not an entirely accessible process.

The human resources team should offer to review the contract with the new employee section by section to make sure that they understand their entitlements and responsibilities and have an opportunity to ask questions.
- ✓ **Produce orientation documents in plain language**

New hires often get packages of long policy and procedure documents to help them understand the business or organisation. Pages and pages of administrative documents are difficult for any employee to find the time to go through in full, and these documents are typically too long and technically worded to be accessible to new hires with intellectual disabilities.

Any information that goes out to new hires should be in plain language.
- ✓ **Ensure orientation happens in-person**

Only sending training or orientation documents for a new hire to read on their own, even if in plain language, is not an accessible process. As is the case with the plain language contracts, orientation needs in person elements to be fully inclusive and accessible.

Review the plain language training documents with the new hire, identify any gaps in understanding, and build a plan together with the new employee to make sure they can get up to speed with how the business works. It may be more effective to review training documents slowly over a period of time as opposed to spending a full day reviewing all of the materials. People with intellectual disabilities will be better able to engage with the process if time is built in to reflect on what they have heard and identify any outstanding questions.

Orientation processes that are built around employees reviewing training videos on their own time tend not to be accessible either – face-to-face orientation is the best way to ensure that new hires understand the company and expectations.

✓ **Clearly communicate the roles of colleagues**

When starting a new job and meeting a group of new colleagues, it is not always made clear which colleagues are in which roles and who the new hire's primary contacts will be in their day-to-day work.

At this stage, it is helpful to share a list with your new hire that explains who the key people are on their team and the ways they might work with different co-workers in the day-to-day work. This list should include the name of the colleagues and a short job overview (1-2 lines) for each colleague so the role differentiation is clear.

Bullet points on how the new employee will work with each of those people could also be helpful to include, and if the group of co-workers has team meetings the schedule for these should also be shared at this stage.

Use our [sample team role explainer](#) as a template!

✓ **Set clear expectations**

Uncertainty in a new role does not create an environment for meaningful work, and puts people with intellectual disabilities (and all other employees without disabilities as well) in a challenging position.

Ensure that the procedures for managers require sitting down with new employees on their first day, setting clear expectations for the role, and identifying some tasks for the new hire to work on during their first week.

Employees with intellectual disabilities may need more support from managers particularly when they are new to ensure they are settling into the role. This means clear verbal and written instructions on what the new hire should be working on during their first day, and later what they should be working on through their first week.

Use our [weekly accessible workplan template](#) for an example of how weekly tasks can be communicated to employees in an accessible way.

## ✓ **Collect feedback**

If the company has only recently begun hiring people with intellectual disabilities, make sure that you are collecting feedback from new hires with intellectual disabilities about their experience going through the recruitment and interview process.

Consider the format – a long written feedback survey is not accessible so ensure people can give feedback in a way that works for them.

It is important to make clear that if a new hire has a negative experience, there will be no negative consequences for sharing critical feedback – make sure new employees with intellectual disabilities know that you want to make your systems better and need their advice to do it!

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## Section 6 - Support & Reasonable Accommodation at Work

A lack of clear guidance and understanding about the kind of support that an employee with an intellectual disability may need at work is one of the biggest deterrents for employers who have a candidate with an intellectual disability in the running for a role.

Conversations about support and examples of what that looks like in a workplace tend to focus on examples that apply to people with physical or sensory disabilities – for example, building a ramp to make a workplace accessible to wheelchair users or installing speech-to-text or read-aloud software for employees with a visual impairment. There are fewer good examples of what support at work looks like for people with intellectual disabilities.

Many employers told us that they assume that support for people with intellectual disabilities is very costly. This may be driven by the misconception that job coaches or personal assistants will be required for all employees with disabilities, which will necessitate employers paying two people instead of one - in reality, most of the support and adjustments that make work more inclusive for people with intellectual disabilities are free. Most forms of support for people with intellectual disabilities are about adjusting ways of working and communicating to be more accessible.

This guide uses the language of “support” to talk about ways for employers to make individual adjustments to ensure someone has equal opportunity to succeed in their job in a workplace.

In many jurisdictions, this concept of support and adjustments is referred to as “reasonable accommodation.” Reasonable accommodation is a term recognized in employment law in some countries, but at present there is no universal definition of reasonable accommodation. Technical definitions of reasonable accommodation in employment law tend to be used most often as a basis for resolving employment disputes, addressing human rights complaints in workplaces, or as a mechanism to define what constitutes “reasonable” expenditure on support for an employer vs. what adjustment asks would be considered “undue hardship” for an employer to implement.

As people with intellectual disabilities have historically been excluded from workplaces, the way that “reasonable accommodation” is interpreted in different countries often does not recognize the support and adjustments that people with intellectual disabilities may need. Framing inclusion around the need for “support” or “adjustments” in a workplace casts a wider net for a business or organisation’s commitment to ensuring inclusion, and ensures that people with intellectual disabilities are not left behind by technical definitions of reasonable accommodation in employment law.

When starting to work towards building supports that will make your workplace more inclusive to people with intellectual disabilities, think about:

**Existing examples of support**

*What types of support do employees in your company already get?*

In many cases, supports that people with intellectual disabilities need are simple accommodations that may already be standard practice within the company.

For example, employees who are parents may be getting accommodations like flexible working hours to align with their childcare schedule. Employees may have flexible deadlines to accommodate for other issues in their personal lives that they may be experiencing. Colleagues who speak your primary language of business as their second language may already be benefiting from colleagues using more accessible language or plain language when speaking with them and giving them directions.

It is important not to assume that you are starting from scratch with providing accommodations and support!

**Mutual support**

*How do colleagues informally support each other?*

Informal support networks form organically among colleagues – your employees likely already have specific co-workers or teams that they go to for questions, additional direction, or support when they are struggling with a task.

This same organic support within the workplace will likely be the primary form of support that your new employee with an intellectual disability will need. Ensuring that co-workers are providing support will likely be a matter of formalizing support structures that already exist, not necessarily creating new ones.

**Workplans and task assignments**

*How are information and tasks communicated within the company?*

One of the most common forms of support that people with intellectual disabilities need is related to accessible communication of tasks and assignments.

If tasks tend to be communicated in ad-hoc or exclusively verbally, transitioning to more formal mechanisms for assigning work can help ensure that employees with intellectual disabilities are confident about their role and their tasks.

Take Action for Ensuring Good Support

Many of the actions that companies can take to deliver good support in the workplace require only small behaviour changes within the company or can be delivered for free. These system-wide changes to ensure that people have access to the support they need will also make the workplace more inclusive for all!

To take action on delivering employees with intellectual disabilities the supports they need:

- ✓ **Do away with “proof of disability” requirements** In some workplaces, people with intellectual disabilities are asked to bring in doctor’s notes to prove their diagnosis, which in turn will determine what supports they can access.

Support should be given based on a person’s support needs, not based on diagnosis.

There are also cost and access barriers for doctor’s notes and medical care for people with intellectual disabilities in all parts of the world, and some people may not have a formal diagnosis.

Requiring proof of disability or medical notes will prevent people from accessing support – HR departments should eliminate “proof of disability” requirements and ensure access to supports based on a person’s self-identification and request.
- ✓ **Ask the individual what support they need** Support requirements are different for every person, and no two people with intellectual disabilities will need the exact same forms of support.

People with intellectual disabilities are the experts on the barriers they face at work and on their own needs, and the easiest way to identify the support that is needed is to ask!

Some people who have never received good support at work may not know what to ask for, which is why businesses should also have a baseline of supports that they make available to employees with intellectual disabilities.
- ✓ **Have a policy of flexible working hours** Flexible work schedules are a frequently requested form of reasonable accommodation for people with intellectual disabilities. People may need more frequent breaks or different start and end times for their day, depending on their needs.

It is also important to consider that people with intellectual disabilities are likely travelling on inaccessible public transport systems to get to work and may need more time to navigate those systems – similarly some people may prefer travelling into or home from work outside of rush hour to make travel on public transit easier.
- ✓ **Adjust timelines as necessary** Employees with intellectual disabilities, particularly those who are new to a role, may need additional time to learn the procedures within the company and complete tasks. Employees with intellectual disabilities also may need additional time to organize their inputs before doing a task.

Ensuring that deadlines accommodate for the time that an employee with an intellectual disability needs to deliver their work is one of the most commonly requested forms of support.

✓ **Identify who will be the primary one-on-one supporter**

While many companies assume that job coaches are necessary for new employees with intellectual disabilities, many companies are transitioning towards a more holistic model of support where ongoing support is delivered by colleagues instead of an external person.

Holistic support given from within the existing employees helps with teambuilding and helps make all employees more inclusive in their work. How employers structure this may vary – some workplaces identify one single supporter from among the colleagues, while others carve out a support role for everyone on the team.

In the short term, when a new employee is hired it is helpful to start with one supporter so that the new hire has a clear point person they can go to for questions and help. It can create confusion and difficulty for people when an employee with an intellectual disability's line manager and their supporter are the same person – the conflation of the manager role and the supporter role can be difficult for both the employee and the manager to navigate. If one single supporter is identified, it is helpful if it is a colleague at the same level as the employee with a disability, ideally a colleague who also has the same line manager.

✓ **Identify touchpoints throughout the workday for delivering support**

It is important for supporters to understand that their role does not entail doing work or making decisions for the employee with an intellectual disability – a support role is about helping make sure that their colleague has all the tools they need to do their work, is able to ask questions and ask for help when they need it, and can get some assistance with organizing their tasks or their daily routine at work if needed. How much support is actually necessary will vary from person to person.

For many people with intellectual disabilities, starting the day with a morning check-in with their supporter to review their tasks for the day is an effective method for supporting the employee to get on track. Having an open invitation for the employee with an intellectual disability to ask questions or ask for help as they work on their tasks throughout the day is essential for delivering **good support**. Progress check-ins throughout the day to share work can also help people stay on track. For employees working together in an office, this kind of support often happens organically between people working in close proximity.

✓ **Ensure no gaps in support**

A back-up support point person should be identified in the event that the primary support is sick, on annual leave, or out of the office for another reason.

✓ **Create an open policy of support and accommodation**

People with intellectual disabilities in your workplace are not the only ones who may require support or adjustments. Family members and caregivers of people with disabilities are a commonly forgotten group that also may require adjustments. Parents of children without disabilities and others who are responsible for care can also benefit from accommodation.

Ensure your reasonable accommodation or support policy is open and allows *anyone* to ask for the support they need.

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## Section 7 - Accessible Workplace Communications

Hiring an employee with an intellectual disability is an opportunity for companies to reflect on their communication with their employees more broadly to ensure it is as accessible as possible.

Workplace communications range from how managers give directions to their direct reports, to formats for staff meetings, to email communication.

Strategies to make the way managers talk to their employees and the way colleagues talk to each other more accessible not only allow people with intellectual disabilities to be included at work, they make communications easier to understand for all employees, colleagues, and customers.

When thinking about adjustments to communications that can make your workplace more inclusive to people with intellectual disabilities, think about:

### **Mapping communication channels**

*What are the different ways that people within the business or organisation communicate with each other?*

Generating a list of the mechanisms for communication is an important place to start in making the internal work of organisations more accessible. Identifying the ways that employees connect with other – whether that is one-on-one through emails, in small groups through team meetings, or across all employees through company newsletters – is the first step towards making a plan for making communications more inclusive.

### **Support for line managers**

*How do line managers usually communicate with the people they supervise, and how can they be supported to be more inclusive?*

Management styles vary from person to person, which means that within a company some employees may take direction from their supervisors in more accessible ways than others. It is important for human resources teams to think through the ways that they can create tools for managers to help ensure that employees working in any area of the business or organisation have equal access to accessible communications.

### Take Action on Accessible Communications

To take action on making internal communications more accessible to people with intellectual disabilities:

✓ **Ensure only one version of internal communications**

When businesses are new to including people with intellectual disabilities in their work, the default assumption is often that the best way to ensure inclusive communications is to create an accompanying “accessible version” alongside their standard communications – for example, the company has an employee expenses policy that is written using complicated and technical language, and then creates an accessible

version using easier language for their employee with an intellectual disability.

Creating separate resources for employees with intellectual disabilities excludes them from their colleagues and is not good practice for creating inclusion. Aim for all communications that go out to all employees to be in accessible formats that everyone can read.

✓ **Create internal standards for email communication**

For day-to-day communications within the organisation, adjusting how employees use email is one of the easiest ways to make the internal communications of the organisation more accessible.

Set the standard that when employees email each other to ask questions or ask someone to do a task, the email should be in a format that is easy for everyone to understand.

Accessible emails are written in plain language, use a larger (typically size 16) font, have line breaks between sentences to make the email easier to read, and use a clear font like Arial. A simple change of default font, size, and spacing settings sets the expectation that all employees should be aiming to make their emails as readable as possible.

✓ **Use standing agendas for team meetings**

When staff meetings cover a wide variety of topics and when employees add new topics to the agenda for discussion at the last minute, this makes it difficult for employees with intellectual disabilities to prepare for the meeting in advance and meaningfully participate.

Have a standing agenda that identifies which topics or areas of work should be covered in discussions with the team will help employees with intellectual disabilities identify what issues to bring to the team meeting for discussions.

Finalized agendas should be shared a few days in advance so employees with intellectual disabilities can review the agenda and prepare for the meetings. If employees are going to be asked specific discussion questions during the meeting or asked to deliver updates, the questions each person will need to respond to should be explicitly noted on the agenda. The discussion questions and the agenda should be in plain language.

Use resources like [available guidance on running inclusive meetings](#) and ensure that managers and others running meetings have a clear sense of how to model and monitor inclusion in meetings.

In some workplaces, a shared document within a team that outlines what each person is working on each week and who else from the team they need to involve makes everyone's

work easier and helps all members of the team manage their time.

Use our [sample team updates document](#) as a template!

✓ **Supplement verbal information with written confirmation**

People absorb information in different ways, and only sharing news and information verbally does not work for everyone.

When new information is shared with employees verbally, whether that is company-wide news shared through a staff meeting or a request from a manager to add a new task to a workplan, verbal information should be followed up with an email confirmation.

Supplementing information shared verbally with written confirmations of requests over email will make it easier for employees with intellectual disabilities to track requests and new information, and will ensure they have all of the information to bring to their supporter if a request for support with the task is necessary.

✓ **Shift communication platforms and software used internally**

Communication platforms used within companies vary in their level of complexity and accessibility, and it is important for companies to be aware of barriers that the software or tools they use internally may create for employees with intellectual disabilities.

People with intellectual disabilities report difficulty using some meeting platforms due to complicated interfaces, menus and options that are not intuitive, or poor accessibility features. For example, people with intellectual disabilities tend to report preferring Zoom over other online meeting platforms because it has the most accessible and user-friendly interface.

This requires a review of software used for meeting, file sharing, and other aspects of the business. Asking your employees with intellectual disabilities to participate in the review and give their feedback on the accessibility of tools you use is a good place to start!

This section covers internal communication shifts to make the ways of working more inclusive for employees with intellectual disability. In the long term, businesses will also need to look outwards and think about how to make their external communications accessible – for example, using plain language in external newsletters or on social media.

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## Section 8 - Inclusive Policy Environments

Becoming an inclusive organisation requires transformation both in policy and in practice.

For many organisations, the transformation begins by introducing and testing inclusive ways of working and is followed up by entrenching those changes in company-wide policy.

It is important not to look only at reasonable accommodation or inclusion policies, but to look at the policy environment as a whole and explore how to mainstream inclusion across all areas of work through policy review.

When working to make a policy environment more inclusive, think about:

**Policy principles**      *What values and principles are behind your policies, and do they need to be reviewed?*

Even policies within a business or organisation that are not disability specific can be rooted in ideas that are inconsistent with inclusion. Some common examples include health and safety policies that are rooted in language about “preventing disability” or safeguarding policies that single out “vulnerable groups” as being in need of special protection.

In both cases, a shift to the underlying purpose of the policies being “keeping everyone in a workplace safe” is a more inclusive message that doesn’t single out employees with disabilities. All policies should be rooted in the goal of ensuring all employees have access to equal opportunities.

**Readability**              *Who is the audience for the policy documents?*

In most cases, employees are the primary audience for any internal policies – they explain expectations, values, and how things work within a company or organisation. Despite policies being resources for employees, often policies are written using jargon or legal language that is not easy to understand for the average employee.

If the goal of the policies is to communicate rules and information to employees, think about the best format to ensure everyone can understand them.

**Format**                      *What formats are the policies available in, and why was that format chosen?*

In most cases, policies within a business or organisation are only available in written formats, even if this might not be the way that everyone likes to consume information. Think about alternative formats like videos that could communicate policy information and rules.

## Take Action on Inclusive Policies

To take action on making internal policies more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities:

- ✓ **Review all policies** Often policies are rooted in language and ideas that single out people with disabilities. All policies should be reviewed to ensure that the policy environment sets out equal access for all.

For example, language about “preventing disability” should be removed from health and safety policies in favour of language around keeping everyone safe.

Language in safeguarding policies should reflect the need to keep everyone safe – it should not be rooted in the idea that some groups are “less able” or are “voiceless” so require extra protections. Safeguarding should apply equally to everyone.

Language in reasonable accommodation policies can also be more inclusive – think about how you can make access to support and flexibility apply to everyone, including family members of people with disabilities, parents, caregivers, and others in need of additional support.
- ✓ **Write all policies in plain language** All employees within a company need to be able to access on demand and fully understand their company’s policies, and this includes employees with intellectual disabilities.

Policies should be written in plain language, larger font size (size 16), a simple and easy to read font (like Arial), and should use frequent line break and bullets instead of paragraphs to make them easier to read.

Take a look at our [sample plain language policy](#) to see what this might look like.
- ✓ **Make sure all employees know where to find company policies** Having policies in accessible formats is only useful if employees know where to find them.

Ensure that the location of policies and what the policies cover is signposted so that employees with intellectual disabilities are familiar with the tools there to support them and where to find them. Remember that even if a policy is written in accessible language, if it is located on a platform that is complicated to navigate, it is not accessible.
- ✓ **Introduce an inclusion policy** Inclusion policies should not only cover inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities – they should affirm the commitment to diverse hiring, set out mechanisms for tracking diversity and inclusion with the business (including people

with intellectual disabilities), and mandate inclusion across all areas of the business.

Inclusion policies can also create mandates for specific areas of the business to transform the way they work – for example, it could mandate the use of plain language in all reports and internal communications or entrench the role of colleague supporters.

✓ **Ensure policies include clear mechanisms for addressing discrimination**

People with intellectual disabilities in the workplace are much more likely to face bullying and harassment than their co-workers with other disabilities or without disabilities, and people with intellectual disabilities also frequently experience denials of support.

Company policies must have clear reporting channels for people who need to report instances of harassment, mistreatment, denial of reasonable accommodation, and other instances of discrimination on the basis of their disability. The policy must affirm that there are no reprisals for the person who reported the instance of discrimination.

# TOOLKIT SECTION

Alongside the guidance for employers on actions to take to make your workplace more inclusive, this guide also includes templates that businesses and organisations can use to make their work more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities.

It is important to note that these templates should not only be used for employees with intellectual disabilities in the workplace – they should be used by all employees, and everyone should be able to access and understand the same policies, documents, and tools.

This toolkit includes a set of seven templates and resources for use in inclusive workplaces:

<b>Sample Accessible Job Description</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Sample Plain Language Interview Questions</b> .....	39
<b>Sample Plain Language Contract Template</b> .....	40
<b>Team Role Introduction Template</b> .....	50
<b>Accessible Weekly Workplan Template</b> .....	51
<b>Staff Task Updates Template</b> .....	52
<b>Sample Plain Language Policy</b> .....	53

While adaptations can be made to all of the documents below to ensure they are a good fit for your workplace and context, ensure that any edits are still in line with the goal of the template – to be in plain language, simple and streamlined, and easy for all employees to understand and use.

For additional guidance on inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in different areas of work not covered by this guidance document – for example, inclusion in project management or the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities at the Board of Directors or Trustee level in a business or organisation, consult the [Listen Include Respect Inclusive Participation Guidelines](#) for additional information and resources.

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## Sample Accessible Job Description

Accessible job descriptions clearly set out the terms of the job, give a clear list of tasks that would be required for the role, and give an example of what the work in a typical day or week might look like.

### Job Description - Communications Assistant

#### What kind of job is this?

The job is the **Communications Assistant** for **Company**.

This is a paid job.

The job is 5 days a week.

The workdays will be Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

The workplace will be at **Company** in New York City.

The job will start on June 1.

The job is permanent, which means it has no end date.

#### What is the job?

The Communications Assistant's main job is to make sure that there is good information about **Company**'s hotels online.

They will write articles and information about travelling to New York and about **Company**.

They will:

- Write posts and help run the company social media pages, like Facebook and Twitter
- Write newsletters and posts for the **Company** website

- Think of new ideas for ways to share news and information with customers
- Collect feedback from people who have stayed at **Company** hotels

## What will a regular workday be like?

Some examples of the type of tasks that the Communications Assistant **might** do in a day are:

- Check and respond to emails
- Write the monthly newsletter about updates from the hotel
- Update our website with new information
- Write a post about interesting things for travellers to do in New York
- Post on the Facebook and Twitter account about travelling to New York
- Answer comments that customers have posted on Facebook and Twitter
- Write a survey for people who have stayed at **Company** Hotels *to tell us what they thought*
- Join Committee meetings to plan new ways to reach out to customers

# Who are we looking for?

We are looking for someone who:

1. *Is good at using social media*

You know how to use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. You can share ideas and messages using these websites.

2. *Has experience with writing*

You like to write. You have written short articles before.

3. *Understands accessibility*

You understand that what we write must be accessible so everyone can be included. You have written or checked accessible information before.

4. *Knows about the city*

You know about interesting things to do for different types of people in New York. You can share ideas of things for people to do while they stay at the hotel.

5. *Can work with a team*

You work well with other people. You can build good relationships with the people you work with.

## How to Apply?

To apply for this job, please answer these questions:

- Why do you want this job?
- What skills do you have that will help you do this job?
- Have you ever done work like this before?
- Why do you think you would be a good Communications Assistant?

You can write the answers to these questions or you can make a video of you answering the questions.

Send your video or the answers you have written to **hr@yourbusiness.com** to apply.

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## Sample Plain Language Interview Questions

The following easy to understand interview questions are examples of the way that questions can be worded during job interviews to make them more accessible.

Interview questions should be provided to the candidate ideally two weeks in advance, one week at the minimum, to allow them enough time to prepare, with a supporter if necessary.

### Sample Plain Language Interview Questions

- Why do you want to do this job? What do you like about it?
- What are some of things that you are good at that could help you do this job?
- One of the main things you would do in this job would be XYZ. Can you talk about a time you have done work like that before?

---

## Plain Language Contract Template

The following contract template can be edited and adapted to align with the statutory requirements in your country. Remember that any contract additions should also be in plain language.

When looking to introduce a plain language contract, aim to use the same plain language template with all new hires – not just the ones with intellectual disabilities.

### **Job Contract**

A contract is a document people sign to show that they agree about something.

This contract is about your job at **Company**.

This type of agreement is called an “Employment Contract.”

Employment is another word that means “job.”

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All of the sections in this contract have numbers. This is so it is easier to find the different sections if you want to talk about them later.

#### **1. Information**

1.1 “Employee” means the person who is doing the job.

The Employee is **Employee Name**.

1.2 “Employer” means the company that hired you.

The Employer is **Company**.

## 2. Start Date and End Date

2.1 The first day of your job with **Company** is **DATE**.

## 3. Job title and duties

3.1 The name of your job is **JOB TITLE**. This is called your “job title.”

3.2 To do your job, there is a list of tasks you need to do for **Company**.

This is called a Job Description.

Your Job Description is attached to this contract.

3.3 Sometimes you might be asked to do other tasks that are not in the Job Description.

3.4 Your manager is **Name of Supervisor**.

They will give you work to do and you will give them updates about how your job is going.

## 4. Workplace

4.1 You will work at the **Company** office.

The address of the office is:

**Address**  
**Country**

4.2 You may be asked to travel for work.

This could be in your country or to other countries.

4.3 All people in the **Country** who have a job have rights.

**Name of Law** is the name of the law that gives you those rights.

**Company** will respect the rights that the law gives you.

## 5. Payment

5.1 You will be paid **\$\$\$\$** per year. This is called your salary.

This amount is before any taxes are taken off.

5.2 Tax is money that people who have jobs have to pay to the government of **Country**.

**Company** will take the tax you have to pay out of your salary and will pay the government for you.

You will get a document at the end of each month which shows how much tax you have paid. This is called a payslip.

5.3 You will not get your salary all at once.

You will be paid once per month.

The money will come on the last day of the month.

5.4 To get your payment, you will have to give **Company** your bank account information.

Then we will put the money into your bank account directly.

5.5 If you owe **Company** money, they can take away the amount of money you owe them from the salary you get paid.

For example, if you take more days off than you are allowed to, **Company** will pay you less to make up for the extra days.

## 6. Hours of work and overtime

6.1 You will work from 9:00am to 5:00pm from Monday to Friday.

This is 35 hours per week.

You get to take a 1 hour break for lunch every day.

6.2 Your manager may ask you to change the hours you work.

For example, if there is a special event that is happening on a Saturday, you may need to work that day even though you normally do not work on the weekend.

6.3 You will need to manage your time so that you can get all your work done in the 35 hours.

Your manager can help you to do this.

## 7. Holiday and holiday pay

7.1 The year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

7.2 Every year you get to take some paid time off. This is called annual leave.

For every year, you get 28 paid days off.

7.3 When you want to use your annual leave days, you need to plan it ahead of time with your manager, and ask for permission.

7.4 You also get a day off on bank holidays.

Bank holidays are days where everyone in **Country** gets the day off.

You are also paid for these days.

7.5 You should use all of your annual leave by the end of the year.

You will not get paid extra for the days you did not take off.

7.6 If you need to take time off for other reasons, like a doctor's appointment or if someone in your family dies, you can ask your manager and they will make a decision.

## 8. Being away from work if you are sick

8.1 If you are sick or hurt and you cannot come to work, you must tell your manager in the morning before 9am.

If you do not tell your manager but stay home because you are sick, you may not be paid your sick pay.

8.2 When you are healthy again and come back to work, you need to fill out a form about your sickness or give a note from your doctor to your manager.

8.3 **Company** will keep a file about you, and when you are sick this information will be added to the file.

8.4 In **Country** there are rules made by the government about when people are sick and can't come to work.

These rules are called the **Name of Relevant Law**.

When you get paid for days you are sick, **Company** will follow these rules.

8.5 You still have to pay tax for your sick pay when you are not working.

Just like with your regular salary, **Company** will pay that tax to the government for you.

8.6 If you are sick and cannot come to work, **Company** might ask you to see a doctor.

They will pay if it costs money to see the doctor, and you will have to share the information the doctor gave you with **Company**.

- 8.7 If you are sick and don't come to work for more than 6 months in a year, **Company** can end this contract and end your job.

## 9. Probation period

- 9.1 When you start working for **Company**, some of the rules will not apply to you for the 6 months of your job.

This is called a probation period. This is a time when you and **Company** decide if the job is going well.

This is usually 6 months but **Company** can make this period last longer.

- 9.2 During your first 6 months, if **Company** does not want you to keep working for them, they can end your job.

They will tell you this one week before your job will end.

- 9.3 During your first 6 months, the rules that **Company** has about sick pay do not start for you yet. They will start after 6 months.

This means if you get sick in the first six months you will not get paid for your time off.

- 9.4 **Company** also has guidelines for what happens when someone breaks the rules.

This is called a disciplinary policy. This also does not apply to you during your first 6 months.

If you break the rules in the first 6 months then your job can end straight away.

- 9.5 Your probation period will end when your manager writes to you to tell you it is over.

## 10. Ending your job

10.1 After the first 6 months, this agreement about your job can be ended at any time.

10.2 **Company** can end your job at any time.

If you have worked at **Company** for less than one year, then they will tell you that the job is ending one week before your last day.

If you have worked at **Company** for more than one year, then they will tell you that the job is ending two weeks before your last day.

If you have worked at **Company** for three years or longer, then they will tell you that the job is ending a few weeks before your last day.

The number of weeks ahead of time they tell you will be the same as the number of years you worked there.

For example, if you worked there for 4 years, they will tell you that the job is ending 4 weeks before your last day.

10.3 If you want to quit, you have to tell **Company** one month before you want to leave.

You have to write a letter to say this.

10.4 If **Company** tells you that your job is ending, instead of working until your last day they might ask you not to work. They will still pay you.

They can tell you not to come to the office during this period.

## 11 Collective agreements

11.1 A collective agreement is a contract between all of the people who work together and the company that they work for.

The people who are part of these types of agreements are part of what is sometimes called a union.

There are no collective agreements for staff at **Company**.

## 12. Breaking the rules

- 12.1 **Company** has steps that they take when someone who works for them does something against the rules.

The action they take is explained in a document called a Disciplinary Policy.

Your manager can give you more information about these rules.

- 12.2 **Company** also has a policy what someone should do when they have a complaint. This is also called a grievance.

Your manager can give you more information about these rules. These rules are not part of your contract.

- 12.2 If there is a complaint against you by someone else, you may not agree with how **Company** solved the problem.

If this happens, you can ask them to have another look at the complaint. This is called “appealing a decision.”

**Company** has rules for how to ask for this that your manager can give you.

## 13 Working out of the office

- 13.1 You may need to do your job from other places sometimes.

- 13.2 If you travel to another country as part of your work for **Company**, you will still be paid your regular salary to your bank account.

You will not get extra payments unless you and your manager have agreed.

## 14 Changing the agreement

14.1 **Company** may change this contract.

If there are any changes they will tell you in writing.

## 15 Other Rules

15.1 **Company** also has other rules that everyone who works for them has to follow. These are called policies.

You will need to know about the policies and where to find them.

15.2 If **Company** makes new rules, they will tell you what the new rules are and you will have to follow them.

15.3 If you do not follow the rules in the policies, then **Company** can take action against you.

The Disciplinary Policy has more information about this.

15.4 You have to make sure you stay safe and take care of yourself, and that you keep others you work with safe too.

The rules for how you do this are called the Health and Safety Policy.

## 16 Confidentiality

16.1 You may be given information about **Company** or other organisations or people that is confidential. Confidential means it needs to be kept a secret.

You cannot tell anyone this information, and if you do **Company** can take action against you.

16.2 You can't talk to the media or say that you represent **Company** without your manager's permission.

## 17 Property

17.1 If **Company** gives you any materials to use for work, like a computer, you must keep them safe.

17.2 When you stop working for **Company**, you need to return those items.

## 18 Expenses

18.1 If you have to spend your own money on something you need to do for work, **Company** will pay you back if you have the receipts.

There is a Travel and Expenses Policy with rules about this.

---

When you sign this, you are saying that you agree with everything in this contract.

You are also saying that you agree to follow the rules of **Company**.

If you have questions about what something in the contract means, you can ask your boss.

### Your signature (the employee)

Date:

### Your manager's signature (on behalf of the employer, **Company**)

Date:

---

## Team Role Introduction Template

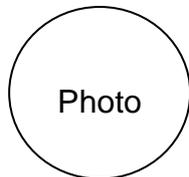
When someone joins a new company, the roles of other colleagues on their immediate team are not always immediately clear. Clarifying the roles and how they intersect from the beginning makes it easier for everyone to understand the boundaries between roles.

### Team Role Introduction

Welcome to the Communications team!

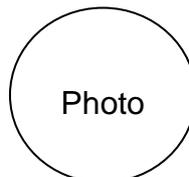
There are four people who work together on the Communications team.

This explains their jobs and how they will work with you.



**Communications Manager:** Maria is the team leader. She is the manager for everyone on the Communications team.

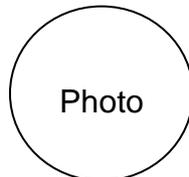
María Jiménez She runs the weekly team meetings and keeps everyone on track.



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**Website Coordinator:** Sarah runs the website.

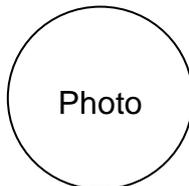
Sarah Hardy She keeps it up to date and adds new information and stories. She might ask you to write things to put on the website.



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**Social Media Coordinator:** Alexei runs the Twitter and Facebook pages.

Alexei Popov He might ask you to write things to share on social media.



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**Storyteller:** Jane talks to the people that our organisation helps.

Jane Massawe She listens to their stories and you will help her write those stories into something the organisation can share.

---

**Content Writer:** You will be a writer. You might write blog posts, new information for the website, articles, or help with social media posts.

**You!**

Maria will train you on how to do this.

Alexei, Jane, and Sarah will ask for your help to write content to share in different places.

## Accessible Weekly Workplan Template

Sharing instructions verbally does not work for many people – using a weekly workplan can help make task management easier.

Tasks should also align with the big goals or milestones set for a role in the job description, so everyone understands what work they are feeding into.

### Weekly Workplan Template

Goal	Task	How important is it?	When is it due?	Steps to take	Who to ask for more help
Goal 1					
Goal 2					
Goal 3					

## Staff Task Updates Template

When working within a team, it can be difficult for people (with and without an intellectual disability) to keep track of what their colleagues are working on, where they should be contributing into the work of others on the team, or understanding who might need additional support with their workload. This can be a particularly big challenge for time management when colleagues ask for support with tasks without advanced notice.

A shared document that staff can update on a weekly basis with the main tasks they are working on that week and who they need support from helps everyone understand how their work fits into the bigger picture of the business or organisation's work, and helps everyone manage their time better.

### Staff Updates Template

WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Member	Main Tasks this week	Who will I need to work with or get help from?
e.g. Kimber	<p><i>This week I am:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Writing new report about inclusive employment</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Manel – I will need you to look at the policy section of the report and give comments</i></p> <p><i>Nancy – I will need help making a communication plan for how to share the report</i></p>

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## Sample Accessible Policy

Accessible policies are written in plain language, clearly signposted, and employees are given support to understand and access them.

### Travel Costs Policy

#### 1 What is this policy about?

This policy is about people travelling to do the work of the business.

This policy explains what happens when an employee or someone else has to travel for work.

This travel could be within the country you live in, or to another country.

#### 2 Who is this policy for?

This policy is for anyone who needs to travel to do their work.

The people who are allowed to travel to do the work of **Company** are:

- Board members or Trustees of **Company**
- Employees of Company of **Company**
- People who have agreement to do work for **Company** for a short period of time. These people are sometimes called “Consultants”
- Other people who are approved to travel by the President of **Company**

### 3 What counts as a work trip?

Travelling for work is when you need to travel away from your home to do parts of your job or do the work of the **Company**.

Some examples would be travelling to go to a work meeting or travelling to meet other organisations we work with.

Personal travel or places that you want to go for fun that are not about work are not work trips.

### 4 What are the rules for booking travel for work?

Going on a work trip must be approved by President of **Company**.

How much money can be spent on the trip (the budget) must be agreed to in advance by the Accountant of **Company**.

Bookings for work travel should always be booked by the Administrative Assistant. Examples of things you could need the Administrative Assistant to book for you are:

- Flight tickets
- Train tickets
- Hotel rooms

Travellers must choose the least expensive option for their travel. For example, with plane tickets travellers must buy a ticket for economy class, not business class.

All of the travel that is booked must be safe for the person going on the trip. **Company** will not agree to anyone travelling to places that are dangerous.

Every trip needs to have travel insurance. The Administrative Assistant will help to get this.

## 5 What can you spend money on for work trips?

When you travel for work, **Company** will pay for:

- Getting you to the place you need to go (for example, your plane tickets or train tickets)
- A place for you to stay while you are travelling for work (like a hotel)
- Your meals while you are on the work trip
- Taxis or other transport to get you to work meetings or events

The **Company** will pay the cost for your tickets, hotel, and meals at the hotel directly.

**Company** will also not pay for:

- Alcohol you drink during your work trip
- Souvenirs or gifts you buy during your work trip
- Costs for other hotel services, like going to the spa or getting laundry done

**Company** will not pay for family members or other people to join you on a work trip.

## 6 How do you get back money for things you paid for yourself?

Sometimes on a work trip there will costs that **Company** can't pay for directly. Some examples are taxis for meetings or meals you ate outside of the hotel.

If you keep the receipt for what you paid, **Company** will pay you back.

To get the money back, you need to fill out the Expense Claim Form.

You should send the Expense Claim Form and all of your receipts to the Accountant. They will pay back the money you spent directly into your bank account.

**Company** cannot pay you back if you don't keep the receipts.

You will get back the same amount of money you spend.

You should not make money or lose money because of a work trip.

Inclusion International

ADD International | BBC Media Action | Benetech | BRAC  
Development Initiatives | Humanity & Inclusion | Inclusion International  
The Institute of Development Studies | International Disability Alliance  
Leonard Cheshire | Light for the World | Sense International | Sightsavers  
Social Development Direct | Standard Chartered | Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

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[www.inclusivefutures.org](http://www.inclusivefutures.org)



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