

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

1. Introduction

The Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB) is committed to equality of opportunity in employment on the basis that discrimination is unacceptable and it is in the best interests of the organisation to ensure that the skills of the total workforce are utilised.

Every day disabled people face barriers that most non-disabled people would never think about. These barriers are not just physical, but can be psychological caused by negative assumptions, attitudes and reactions. With a major change in attitudes and small practical changes to the working environment, more people who may be currently excluded could be engaged and included within SIB. Accordingly, through this Code of Practice, we aim to reduce the barriers that prevent disabled people from succeeding, helping them to maximise their full potential in terms of employment.

2. Definition

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 amended the definition of disability. It removed the requirement that a mental illness should be 'clinically well-recognised'. It also ensured that people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be covered by the DDA effectively from the point of diagnosis, rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3. Aims and objectives

This Code of Practice sets out how SIB will ensure that people with disabilities who apply for jobs and disabled members of staff will know that they will receive a fair and equal opportunity. SIB will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that employment arrangements or premises do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person.

4. Recruitment and selection

SIB is committed to –

- Developing a working environment and offering terms and conditions of employment which will enable disabled people, with appropriate skills, to obtain and maintain employment with SIB;
- Collaborating with organisations which represent the interests of disabled people with a view to seeking advice and support in recruiting and retaining disabled people;
- Stating in appropriate advertisements that applications from disabled people are particularly welcome;
- Ensuring that there are no unnecessary requirements in job descriptions/personnel specifications that may serve to exclude disabled people;
- Providing information and accepting job applications in alternative formats;
- As far as possible, taking into account previous experience other than paid work experience which may be relevant to the job;

- Shortlisting any disabled applicant who meets the essential requirements of the post and considering them on their abilities;
- Making practical arrangements to assist the interview process, e.g. modifying testing procedures, providing an interpreter;
- Ensuring staff involved in the recruitment process are properly trained in matters of equal opportunities including disability awareness.

5. Induction

SIB will ensure the integration of disabled staff into the workforce as follows –

- Offering an opportunity to discuss their employment needs before starting the job;
- Ensuring appropriate induction into the organisation and work of the department;
- Providing accommodation and/or equipment which is suitable for their needs.

6. Training and development

SIB will ensure that –

- Disabled employees have the same opportunity as other staff to develop their full potential within the organisation;
- All training and development opportunities are accessible to disabled people, in terms of both location and materials;
- A high level of awareness of disability is maintained throughout the organisation.

7. Staff who become disabled

SIB undertakes to consult with employees who become disabled in their present employment. When deciding what reasonable adjustments can be made, consideration will be given to the cost involved and the practicality of making the adjustment. Examples of adjustments which SIB will consider making for employees (or potential employees) include:

- Adjustment to premises;
- Modifying duties with those of another employee;
- Altering working hours;
- Assigning a different work place;
- Allowing a person with disabilities to be absent for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment;
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or reference manuals;
- Providing a reader or interpreter;
- Providing additional supervision or support.

8. Health and Safety and access to buildings

SIB will seek to ensure, as far as is practicable, that disabled people have physical access to all its facilities and that disabled people are provided with a safe environment in which to work.

9. Responsibilities

SIB expects that individual employees at all levels will accept personal responsibility for the practical application of this Code of Practice. Managers will be expected to make clear to employees the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act and to ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and in a consistent manner.

Employees will be made aware of their responsibilities through information in the staff handbook and induction pack and through awareness training.

10. Monitoring

SIB will monitor its applicants, workforce and the effectiveness of this Code of Practice on a regular basis. In particular, disabled employees will be asked on a regular basis what more can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities at work.

11. Complaints

SIB recognises fully the right of disabled people to complain about discrimination should it occur. Employee complaints should, in the first instance, be made under the established grievance procedure, to the appropriate line manager.