

Advise employers about the benefits, processes and practices to recruit and retain a diverse workforce

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## Overview

### **What is this Standard about?**

This standard is about engaging with employers to enable them to understand the benefits of developing processes and practices to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. It includes providing support to the employer to review their employment practices, to facilitate workforce diversity, while at the same time meeting their business needs. In the context of this standard the term "job seeker" applies to an individual seeking some form of paid employment.

### **Who is this Standard for?**

This standard is for all supported employment practitioners

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## Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. access local, regional and national sources of labour market information to identify potential employers
2. articulate and promote the business case for a diverse workforce to employers in the local area, to secure their commitment and involvement in the **supported employment** process
3. make initial contact with employers to identify potential job opportunities.
4. provide support to employers to overcome perceived and actual barriers to employing and retaining a diverse workforce
5. advise employers on how to customise jobs to meet the needs of individual job seekers
6. propose **reasonable adjustments** that employers could make to facilitate the recruitment and selection, support, mentoring and management of a diverse workforce
7. advise employers on how to meet current national and international employment and equality legislation requirements for the workforce

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## Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. local, regional and national sources of market information and how to access them
2. key employers locally, regionally and nationally and their interest and engagement in **supported employment**
3. the business case for employers recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce
4. how to make initial contact with employers across different sectors in a way that engages and interests them
5. the main concerns and perceived barriers for employers in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and how to address them
6. how to secure the employer's commitment to engage in the **supported employment** process
7. the types of advice and awareness training employers may require to understand the support requirements of job seekers
8. ways in which jobs and recruitment and selection processes can be adapted to meet employer and job seeker needs
9. processes that employers may adopt to support employees who become sick, disabled or stressed while at work
10. how to support employers in developing their organisational culture to embrace **diversity** and inclusion
11. the type of **reasonable adjustments** that employers can be encouraged to make to attract, support, mentor and manage a diverse workforce
12. current national and international employment and equality legislation requirements for the workforce

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## Values

For a supported employment practitioner to practice competently he or she must apply skills and knowledge that is informed by a set of values. Supported employment practitioners are expected to be aware of and to apply a value based and ethical approach in their practice.

It is also recognised that the values as well as the NOS may need to be placed within the local, national, social and political context in which supported employment activities are undertaken.

### Values of Supported Employment

1. An understanding of the positive contribution people with disabilities and/or disadvantages can make in the workplace.
2. Understand the main components of a real job (wages are paid at the going rate for the job, with the same terms and conditions as all other employees; the job helps the person to meet their life goals and aspirations; the role is valued by managers and colleagues; the job has similar hours and times at work as other employees, with safe working conditions).
3. Understand the "zero rejection" philosophy of supported employment and that everyone can work, with the right job and the right support.
4. Supported employment does not adhere to a work readiness model. It is about getting people into competitive employment first with training and support on the job: a "place, train and maintain" approach.
5. Job search should happen at the earliest opportunity.
6. Choice and control – people are presented with a variety of experiences, options and support to achieve their career aspirations. Support is built around an individual, promoting choice and career satisfaction. All options assume successful employability.
7. Partnership – there is genuine partnership between the person, their family carers, employers, community supports and the provider of supported employment.
8. Full inclusion – people are supported to be full and active members of their workforces and wider communities, both socially and economically.
9. Support services recognise the importance of the employer as a customer of supported employment in their own right with requirements that need to be satisfied.
10. Draws on Social Role Valorisation (SRV) in recognising that people

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with disabilities and/or disadvantages are often regarded as of less value than others in society, resulting in poor life outcomes. Employment is a valued social role and becoming employed can help reverse societal devaluation, with wider positive consequences for the person.

11. Draws on the social model of disability recognizing that disability is the product of the physical, organizational and attitudinal barriers present within society leading to discrimination. The removal of discrimination requires a change of approach and thinking in the way in which society is organized, in this case removing barriers to employment.

12. Recognises that not many people stay in the same job for the whole of their working lives and people with disabilities and/or disadvantages are no different in having to adapt to changing labour markets and wanting to improve their working lives. Supported employment should encourage the career development of individuals by promoting training opportunities and seeking options for increased responsibility by offering time unlimited support.

## Glossary

**Diversity:** Aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for everyone.

**Reasonable Adjustment:** Equality Law recognises that bringing about equality for disabled people may mean changing the way in which employment is structured, the removal of physical barriers and/or providing extra support for a disabled worker or job applicant, this is the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

**Supported Employment:** Supported employment is the term for high quality, personalised support for people with disabilities and/or disadvantages which enables them to seek, access and retain employment in the open labour market. It is a "place, train and maintain" approach that does not rely on long periods of pre-vocational training or a basic level of qualification or experience.

## External Links

British Association for Supported Employment:  
<http://base-uk.org/> for England, Scotland and Wales

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Scottish Union of Supported Employment:

<http://www.susescotland.co.uk/>

Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment:

<http://www.niuse.org.uk>

European Union of Supported Employment:

<http://www.euse.org/>

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