



Equitable Induction and In Work Support Guide

**Setting people up for success through
inclusive design, supportive practices and
tailored workplace resources.**

Guide contents

This guide was developed in partnership with the SUSE Experience Network of people with lived experience of disability. SUSE also worked with Alliance for Inclusion, who deliver a range of consultancy services to support inclusive workplaces. This guide has been designed to work for businesses of any size and sector.

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Why Equitable Induction and In-Work Support Matters

Disability inclusion is a positive benefit to businesses because it strengthens their workforce, improves business performance and offers a selling point to recruit talent. However, many employees today face multiple barriers based on protected characteristics, such as age, gender and ethnicity. Therefore, employers should be aware of a variety of different support types, not just offering more support.

Equitable onboarding to the workplace and effective in-work support are key elements in creating an inclusive environment. If we remove unnecessary barriers, we enable employees to perform at their best, increase their productivity and make it less likely they will move on, reducing absence and turnover and avoiding the cost of recruiting a replacement.

By tailoring support, we give everyone an opportunity to thrive and contribute and employers can feel confident they are meeting their legal obligations.



Including People with Lived Experience

It's beneficial to get feedback from people who have lived experience of disability when you're thinking about making changes in the workplace. They can help design an induction programme that works for everyone and support managers and colleagues to devise reasonable workplace adjustments.



Some simple things you can do:

- Have a designated person in the management or HR team for people to contact. Allow this to be confidential.
- Ask people with lived experience if they can be testers for a new process before it is introduced and act on what they tell you.
- Promote the fact that you consult with people who have lived experience. Your customers will appreciate this.
- Include people with a range of identities and backgrounds, recognising that experience of disability differs across communities.

Creating an inclusive induction process



Start with a review of what you are currently doing.

- Review your existing induction processes, training materials and resources.
- Get input from recent starts, disabled staff, front line managers any staff networks.
- You can use focus groups, 1-to-1 interviews or staff surveys to do this.
- Identify any issues relating to accessibility of documents or digital tools.
- Review the training courses you deliver – get feedback from attendees – particularly disabled staff.
- Include in-house communications.
- Include any mentoring activities or 1-to-1 training (think about how people usually learn the job in your business).
- Include handbooks and any learning manuals.
- Remember to look at key company policies e.g. Health & Safety, Lone Working, Absence Management.

Look at HR forms such as Emergency Contacts and Requests for Reasonable Adjustments.

Develop an Action Plan with your team

Pull everything together into a SMART action plan.

It will take time and resources to address everything you have identified – so be realistic and allow time to do it well. Look for opportunities to involve disabled staff as much as you can.

You may want to form a working group to lead on this with staff, HR and front line managers.

Communicate with the workforce – tell them what you are doing and why.



As you update and improve induction resources, get regular feedback from your staff:

- are they an improvement?
- are they achieving their intended purpose?
- are they now properly accessible?



Test the new resources as they are introduced with new recruits to the business – get feedback – and act on it.

Inclusive Communication & Accessible Information



Organise training for your staff and managers on Inclusive Communication and Accessible Information.

Inclusive Communication is how you think about communicating with your audience.



Before you communicate – think about how you are doing it:

- Will everyone understand what you are trying to put across?
- Is there a better way of doing it to reach everyone, and not exclude people?

Accessible Information is how you make sure the information and services that you provide can be used by everyone who needs the information (e.g. employees or customers). Accessible information is the tools that you use to make communication accessible and inclusive.



Five things to start with:

- Can you produce documents and forms in a variety of formats?
- Are you using plain language and avoiding jargon?
- Are there people with lived experience in your business that could look at the information and give you feedback?
- Can you provide communication support for people who need it?
- Are your sites, venues and online meeting spaces accessible for disabled people?

Most organisations have a structured induction process. This can be useful to ensuring that all new starts get the information they need, essential training is carried out and the employer has carried out their legal obligations (such as offering reasonable adjustments).



It can also help the employer to:

- Tailor the induction to each individual's needs while maintaining consistency in core content.
- Identify who is responsible for each element - HR, line managers or mentors.
- Ensure everything is done in a timely manner and nothing gets missed.
- Provide opportunities for regular check ins.
- Ensure key milestones are reached for each employee, including job functions, knowledge and competence.



These also apply to an Inclusive Induction Process. The following pages describe the key elements to include.

What to include in an Inclusive Induction process



The first thing to consider when designing a new process is to make sure the resources are accessible.

- Ensure digital induction materials follow accessibility standards Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Give written instructions, manuals and policies in plain language.
- Offer multiple formats if you can: written, audio, video, easy read, and step by step guides.
- Provide assistive technology options (captioning, screen readers, dictation, ergonomic setups tailored to individuals).



More information on Digital Accessibility can be found in the SUSE Workplace Digital Accessibility Guide. See our Further Guidance and Resources at the end of this guide.



Next – think about the principles:

- It should be **person centred and inclusive** – the checklist adapts to each employee’s needs and experiences while recognising **intersectionality**, so that it promotes genuine fairness.
- It’s **proactive** – accessibility and adjustments are considered early, not only if a problem arises.
- It’s **flexible** – topics may be delivered in different formats or at different times
- It’s **collaborative** – the process supports open conversation and communication between employer and employee.
- It’s **confidential and respectful** – information about health, disability or adjustments is handled sensitively.



Your process should clearly demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are embedded into the culture of your workplace and are available by default not only on request.

An Inclusive Induction Plan

The best way to ensure the process is carried out equitably is to have the full process laid out in an individual plan for the employee (this could be a checklist).



Each section should include:

- The **Topic** – what needs to be covered.
- Who is **Responsible** – who is leading or supporting.
- The appropriate **Format** – such as eLearning resources, forms, handbooks, 1 to 1 support or mentoring, training courses etc.
- Suitable **Accessibility Prompts** for managers – questions or checks to ensure the topic is delivered accessibly.
- Planned **Completion dates / review points** – with flexibility where adjustments are required.



When producing the induction plan / checklist:

- Use **inclusive language** throughout.
- Use **conversation based prompts** instead of yes/no questions.
- Approach equitable induction as a shared responsibility for the employer and employee.

Pre Start (before day one of employment)

This stage is important as it sets the tone for the job start and induction.



Key elements may include (see the next list on how this information should be provided):

- Offer letter and contract of employment.
- Health declaration.
- Reasonable adjustment discussion.
- Access to Work information.
- Directions, first day arrangements and what to bring.



When designing this section of the plan / checklist ensure it prompts managers to:

- Ask **how information should be provided** (e.g. large print, plain English, digital copies, audio).
- Confirm **preferred communication methods** (email, phone, video, written).
- Discuss **reasonable adjustments**, before work begins.
- Provide clear, accessible travel and building access information.
- Allow alternative ways to return forms if standard processes present barriers.
- Think about **intersectional factors** (e.g. confirm any cultural, religious or caring needs that may affect start dates and working patterns).



Ensure ample time to discuss and record reasonable adjustments required for induction and the job role.

First Days and Personnel Information



This section covers the practical realities of starting work. The following information should be provided in an appropriate format:

- Payroll and pensions.
- IT access, logins and two factor authentication.
- Use / receipt of company equipment and property.
- Job description and role expectations.
- Supervision and management processes.
- Annual leave, flexible working and absence.



The induction plan / checklist should prompt managers to consider:

- Whether IT systems, software and hardware are accessible.
- Are adjustments needed for login processes or security requirements?
- Whether flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments have been discussed and put in place.
- Whether the current supervision styles, frequency or format is appropriate.
- Company policies are in accessible language.
- Can we devise a first day plan so new employees feel confident, not overwhelmed?
- Can we introduce key people gradually e.g. line, colleagues etc so they know who to go to for help?
- How can we allow sufficient time for orientation, reading, and familiarisation, without overwhelming the new employee?



The key to doing this well is to replace assumptions with questions that allow open conversations with the new employee.

Company Policies and Structure



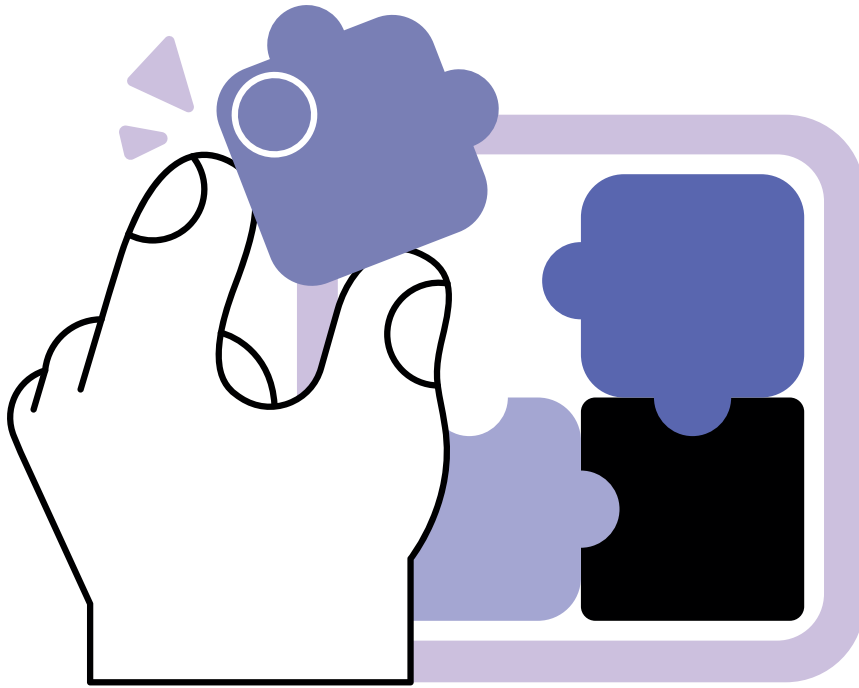
This information should be available in accessible formats and/or opportunities for 1-to-1 learning or mentoring. Topics may include:

- Health and safety policy.
- Fire safety and evacuation procedures.
- First aid.
- Lone working.
- Homeworking set up.
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) (if necessary).
- Company organisational structure.
- Policies (grievance, disciplinary, flexible working, working from home).



The induction plan / checklist should prompt managers to consider:

- Allowing sufficient time for discussion.
- Creating opportunities for questions and clarification.
- An introduction to internal and external support e.g. Health & Safety officer.
- Explicitly flagging policies related to reasonable adjustments, flexible working and inclusion.



Training and Development

The inclusive induction plan / checklist should identify essential training and ongoing development opportunities. Examples might include:

- Mandatory training (e.g. Health and Safety, GDPR, First Aid).
- Role specific training.
- External and internal learning opportunities.



The induction plan / checklist should prompt managers to consider how this will be tailored to the individual's needs, for example:

- Accessible training formats e.g. pace, breaks, materials, captions, delivery style.



Specifically consider the following:

- Can we pace the training to the learner, to avoid overwhelming the new employee with too much all at once?
- Can we use job coaching approaches (buddying, task breakdown, repetition)?
- Can we provide step by step guides, checklists and video walkthroughs to reinforce learning?



Other adjustments might include:

- Time for practice, reflection and supported learning.
- Adjustments for assessments or certification processes.
- Additional time or support when it might be required.
- Opportunities for the employee to identify their own development needs.



A one size fits all approach to learning won't work. Remember - replace assumptions with questions.

Communications and Systems



The inclusive induction plan / checklist should identify how communications and in-house systems will be accessible for the new employee. This might include:

- Email, calendars and digital tools.
- CRM or internal systems.
- House style and branding (where relevant).



The induction plan / checklist should prompt managers to consider the individual's needs, for example:

- Are the businesses communication tools accessible to the employee?
- Are alternative tools or adjustments required?
- Is guidance available in clear, accessible formats?



Attachments should also be accessible.



Further Guidance and Resources:

See our comprehensive list at the end of this guide.

Reasonable Adjustments



Reasonable adjustments are changes an employer makes to remove or reduce a barrier related to someone's disability. For example:

- Finding a different way to do something.
- Making changes to the workplace if it's economical to do so.
- Changing someone's working arrangements.
- Providing equipment, services or support.

Reasonable adjustments are specific to an individual employee and can be for any disability or long-term health condition.



Supported Employment is a comprehensive support service from employment specialists who match disabled people with suitable employers, provide job coaching, and offer ongoing assistance to both employee and employer.



Further Guidance and Resources:

See our comprehensive list at the end of this guide.



Some examples of reasonable adjustments:

- Giving written instructions, manuals and policies in plain language.
- Providing some extra support e.g. having a supervisor go over technical information in a one-to-one meeting at the employee's pace.
- Allowing employees to work from home or in a hybrid working pattern.
- Arranging flexible working hours such allowing later start times, reduced hours or amending shift patterns.
- Providing specialist equipment or software for someone to do their job (Access to Work can help).

Allowing employees to work from home or in a hybrid working pattern can be a great reasonable adjustment.



Linking inclusive induction and in-work support to reasonable adjustments

Frame conversations around what helps employees reach their potential, linking this directly to why adjustments to the induction process and in the job role set people up for success and are welcomed by the organisation.

Have a range of tools and resources available, such as reasonable adjustment request forms and examples of common accommodations.



You should aim to provide structured in work support beyond the induction period. You can do this by working with the employee to agree an In-Work Support Plan. The keys to success are:

- Expect to provide support for at least the first 12 months of employment.
- Hold regular review meetings that explore what's working and where adjustments are still needed.
- Carry out regular informal check-ins – quick conversations to make sure things are going well or issues are promptly identified.
- Managers should be proactive – don't wait for issues to arise.
- Regularly review any adjustments that have been agreed as circumstances change or the person's role develop.



There are Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) in every local authority in Scotland. They can link employers to local organisations who have suitable candidates for job vacancies or can assist with in-work support.



Further Guidance and Resources:

See our comprehensive list at the end of this guide.

What to include in the In-work Support Plan



The plan should promote accessibility, dignity and consistency and show a clear path towards independent working. It can include the following:

1. The employee's accessibility needs and how these are met.
2. Roles and Responsibilities – who will provide support e.g. line managers, HR, mentors.
3. Planned Training & Development activities – to learn the job tasks and develop independence, updated regularly.
4. Regular Supervision and Appraisal – and any adjustments to the processes.
5. Reasonable adjustments agreed and the review timescale.
6. Managing challenges and sourcing help when it is needed.
7. Maintaining wellbeing and building workplace relationships.
8. A schedule for reviewing the plan.

The plan should be SMART and ambitious. It should properly reflect the employee's support needs but it should promote independence and the tailing off of support when it is realistic to do so.



The Scottish Government's Fair Work policy aims to improve the working lives of people in Scotland and boost economic growth.



Further Guidance and Resources:

See our comprehensive list at the end of this guide.

Creating a Health & Wellbeing Passport

A Health and Wellbeing Passport is a confidential document that captures details about a new employee's disability or health conditions and any workplace adjustment that have been agreed. It can be helpful to ensure the important information has been gathered and is acted upon. It must be stored securely.



A passport should be relevant to each workplace but it could include the following:

- An introduction and rationale for the passport - this should give assurances to staff about how information is handled and who it is shared with.
- The employee's personal details.
- Description of the person's condition/impairment and their impact on the work role. The employee can describe how this affects them both in and outside work.
- Is it a fluctuating condition? Does the employee have good days and bad days?
- The agreed reasonable adjustments, signed off by the employee and line manager/HR. Any changes or updates need to be agreed by both parties.
- Additional support e.g. has an application been submitted to Access to Work? Is occupational health involved?
- Workplace Adjustments FAQs.
- An Adjustment Review Record, with an agreed timescale. This can be done during routine processes such as an annual appraisal.
- Useful links and resources. This should include internal and external resources the employee can access for support and advice such as company policy documents, diversity champions, inclusion strategies and occupational health information.



Further Guidance and Resources

These resources offer further support on developing an inclusive and accessible induction process and supporting staff with in-work support.

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Equitable Induction Resources

- Visit Values Into Action Scotland for more information on creating Easy Read documents
<https://viascotland.org.uk>
- SUSE has produced an example Induction Checklist. This is available on the Apt website
<https://apt.suse.org.uk/resources/>

2 In-Work Support Guidance

- Visit the Apt website for our full guidance on producing an accessible in-work support plan
<https://apt.suse.org.uk/resources/>
- Creating a Health and Wellbeing passport further information and examples
<https://apt.suse.org.uk/resources/>
- For more information on reasonable adjustments including examples and case studies, visit: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/codes-practice/employment-code-practice-0>

3 Apt Making It Work – Employer Guides

- Employer's Guide to Positive Workplace Conversations.
- Employer's Guide to Improving Workplace Consultations.
- Employer's Guide to Workplace Digital Accessibility.
<https://apt.suse.org.uk/resources/>

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AI Accessibility

SUSE has compiled a selection of additional AI resources that you can access from their website:

- AI Policy Template - Example policy and AI use statement to help you develop your own approach to using AI in recruitment and training.

<https://www.suse.org.uk/employers/good-practice-guide/accessible-ai-use/>

- AI Scotland – Helps businesses adopt AI responsibly, providing support with skills, resources, and guidance on funding and policy.

<https://www.aiscotland.scot/>

To promote inclusion in the workplace SUSE provides training on:

- General disability awareness.
- Sensory awareness (people who are blind or deaf or have an impairment).
- Neurodiversity awareness.
- Reasonable adjustments and the recruitment process.
- Accessible communication.

<https://www.suse.org.uk/what-we-do/inclusive-workplace-training>

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General Resources

- Fair Work - The Scottish Government's Fair Work policy aims to improve the working lives of people in Scotland and boost economic growth. It outlines what employers can do to build fairer working practices into their organisations.

<https://www.mygov.scot/browse/business/fair-work>

- Good Practice Guides – Top Tips for employers on topics such as writing inclusive job adverts, hosting accessible online events, and making digital recruitment fair.

<https://apt.suse.org.uk/resources>

- Local Employability Partnerships - a network of partners who deliver services for unemployed people and employers.

<https://www.employabilityinscotland.com/local-employability-services>

- Supported Employment - There are Supported Employment services in all parts of Scotland. Find out more about Supported Employment.

<https://www.suse.org.uk/what-is-supported-employment/>



You can access further support from SUSE by going to their website

<https://www.suse.org.uk>



If you need support please
contact SUSE for assistance.

www.suse.org.uk

