
From the Ministers

We want the State Sector to take a leadership role in employing disabled people. Employing disabled New Zealanders will give the public confidence that the State Sector understands, and is responsive to, the needs of its diverse citizens. New Zealanders expect that the State Sector is truly representative of the New Zealand population.

Nearly a quarter of the working aged population is disabled, so failing to tap into this employment pool will mean that the State Sector is potentially missing out on people who can be valuable contributors to New Zealand.

This Toolkit is part of a raft of initiatives that we are introducing to assist the State Sector to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for disabled people.

Employment is important for everyone. Unfortunately some employers overlook disabled New Zealanders. This may be because of (false) beliefs about the costliness and difficulty of employing disabled people, or unwarranted health and safety concerns.

This Toolkit is a valuable resource for State Sector leaders, managers and HR professionals. Another resource that sits alongside this Toolkit is a video, *Taking the Lead*, which showcases disabled people who have been successfully employed in the State Sector. Disabled employees and their managers have been interviewed. The positive and inspiring stories of these employees truly illustrate that the employment of disabled people in the State Sector is a win-win situation for everyone – managers, the organisation, the clients and New Zealand as a whole.

We are looking to chief executives to drive the change needed in their organisations to increase the employment of disabled people. We are calling on you to step up and make this happen. This will make a huge difference to the lives of disabled people and their families and add real value to your organisation. We encourage you to take the time to have a look through this Toolkit and work with your leadership, management and HR teams to ensure that it is widely distributed and used by your staff.



Hon Paula Bennett
Minister of State Services



Hon Nicky Wagner
Minister for Disability Issues

Busting the myths about disabled employees



Myth 1

Providing accommodations for disabled people is expensive.



Fact 1

Most disabled people don't need anything different to perform their jobs, and for those who do, the cost is usually minimal. Only 10% of disabled workers under the age of 65 reported that they had modifications or specialist equipment in their workplace. The most common reasonable accommodation is flexible working arrangements. An Australian study found that accommodations for disabled people are financially cost-neutral or cost-beneficial to the organisation as a whole.¹ Technology has also removed many barriers faced by disabled people, enabling more people to reach their full potential.



Myth 2

Disabled employees are a greater health and safety risk than employees without disabilities.



Fact 2

Evidence shows that disabled employees have fewer health and safety issues, because in managing their impairment they have developed strategies to address health and safety risks. In fact, the Australian study found that disabled employees averaged one-sixth the recorded occupational health and safety incidents of non-disabled employees. They were also cheaper to maintain in employment (because of lower recruitment, safety and insurance costs).

1. Graffam, J., Smith, K., Shinkfield, A. and Polzin, U. (2002). *Employer benefits and costs of employing someone with a disability*. Melbourne: Institute of Disability Studies, Deakin University. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 17, 251-263.



Myth 3

Disabled employees have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.



Fact 3

Studies show that disabled people actually have lower rates of absenteeism, with the Australian study finding that they were absent from work 85% less than their colleagues without disabilities.



Myth 4

The Human Rights Act 1993 forces employers to hire unqualified disabled individuals.



Fact 4

An individual must first meet all requirements for a job and be able to perform its essential functions with reasonable accommodations. Support Funds can be used for reasonable accommodation and training. If at any point in the selection process it becomes apparent that a candidate cannot perform the core requirements for the job, then, regardless of whether they are disabled or not, the organisation is under no obligation to hire them.



Myth 5

Under the Employment Relations Act 2002, an employer cannot terminate the employment of a disabled employee.



Fact 5

Employers can terminate employment of disabled employee under three conditions:

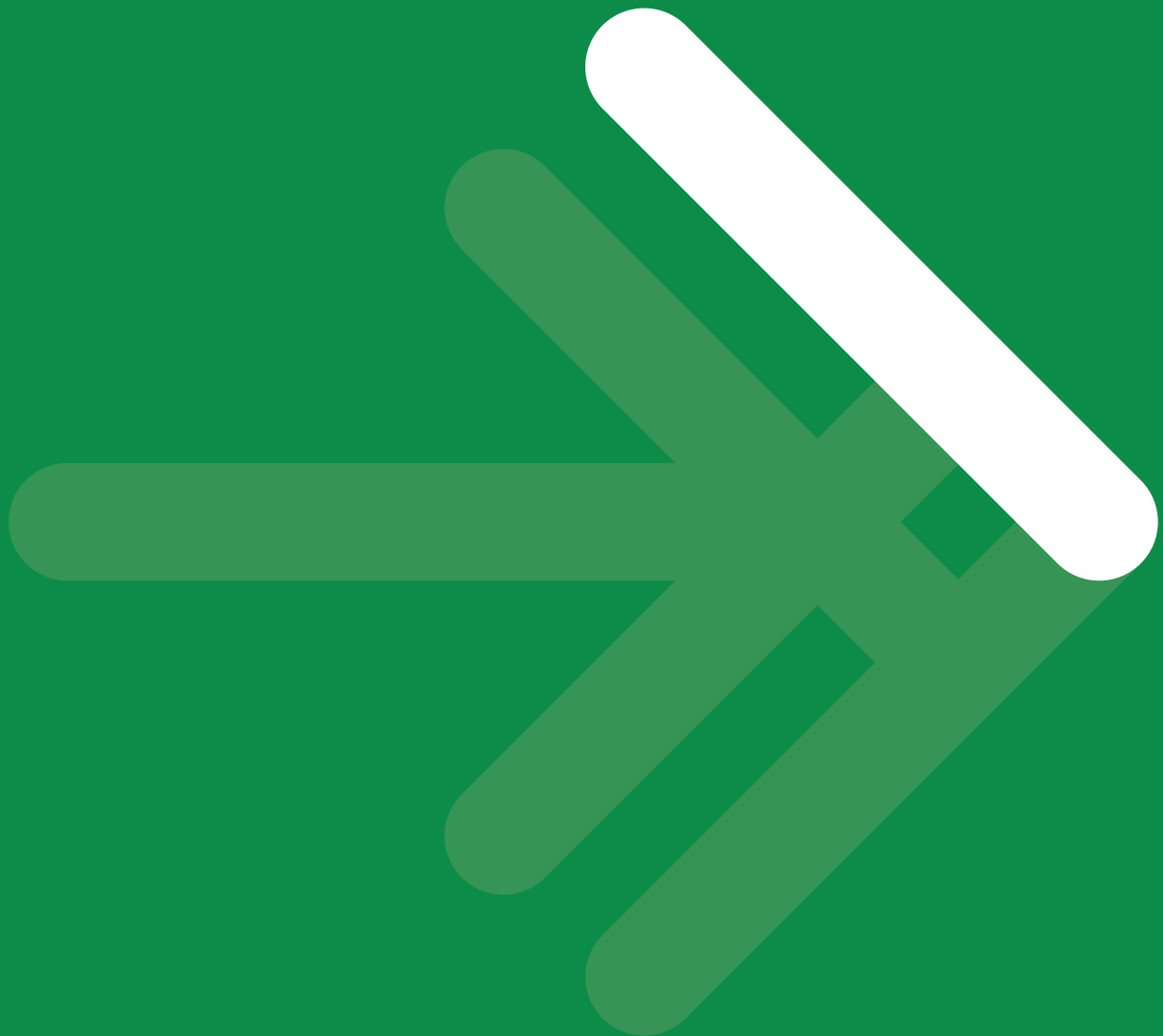
1. The termination is unrelated to the disability, or
2. The employee does not meet legitimate requirements for the job, such as performance or production standards, with a reasonable accommodation, or
3. The employee poses a direct threat to health or safety in the workplace because of their disability.

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About this Toolkit



1.1

What is disability?

**Nearly 1 in 4
New Zealanders
identifies as
having a disability.**

There are many different kinds of disability – including physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health related.

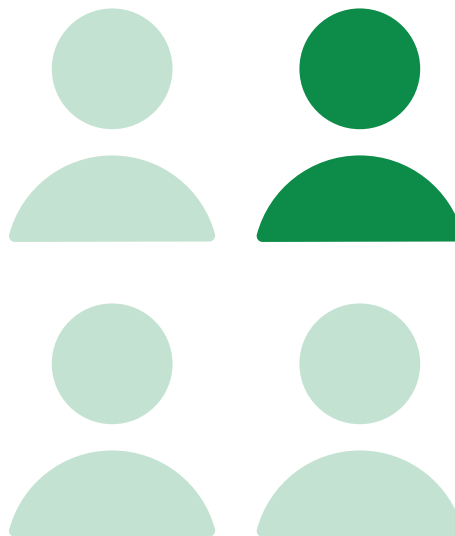
A disability may be visible or hidden, permanent or temporary and could have a minor or major impact on a person's life. A disability may affect mobility, ability to learn, ability to see or ability to communicate easily.



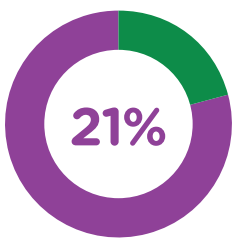
Who are disabled people?

Disabled people are throughout our community: men, women, and children; employers and employees; students and teachers; people of all ethnicities and religions; customers and citizens.

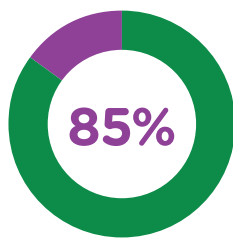
No two people are the same, and no two people with the same disability experience it in the same way.



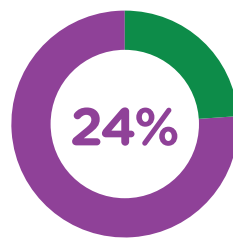
The facts



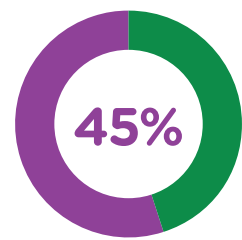
21% of people aged 15 to 64 years are disabled.



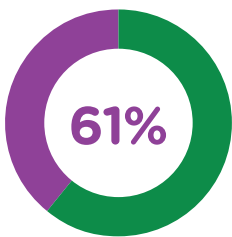
85% of disabled 15 to 64 year olds are not disabled at birth.



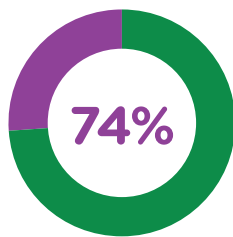
24% of people in New Zealand are disabled.



45% of disabled adults are employed compared with 72% of non-disabled adults.



61% of disabled people aged 15 to 64 were working in paid jobs in 2013.



74% of those who weren't employed said they would like to work if a job was available



3.7 – 6.9%² of employees in the State Sector identify as being disabled.

2. This estimate is from a Human Right Commission (2014) survey covering 88% of the public service. It is acknowledged as an underestimate due to challenges collecting reliable data. The State Services Commission stopped collecting data in 2002 because of these challenges. At that time, 6.9% identified as being disabled, down from 10.6% in 1998.

1.2

How this Toolkit can help you

This is a 'how to' Toolkit for employing disabled people in the State Sector.

Disabled people are a fabulous untapped talent pool of loyal and committed employees. They bring a perspective that can help transform an organisation's culture, client relations and performance for the better.

The State Sector is in a unique position to take a leadership role in employing disabled people and take advantage of their skills.

This Toolkit contains a range of information and resources for leadership teams, managers and human resources teams to help them employ disabled people within their organisations.



Leadership

Disabled people account for 24% of the New Zealand population.³ Taking the lead in increasing the number of disabled people employed will enhance your reputation and assist you to be more client-centred.

Staff within a State Sector agency look to their leadership team to drive and champion change. This Toolkit explains how leadership teams can drive the change within their own organisations, as well as the business case for why they should.



Human resources

Human resources teams have a responsibility to attract the best possible candidates, including disabled people, for roles within their organisation. This Toolkit provides advice about how to ensure that your recruitment process provides access to the talent pool of disabled people.



Managers

Managers need to attract the best people to their teams. Disabled people are a fabulous pool of untapped talent of loyal and committed employees. An important part of any manager's role is getting the best from all employees, including disabled employees.

This Toolkit builds managers' confidence to recruit the best people for their jobs, including disabled people. It also helps managers to work effectively with all employees by using an adaptive and flexible management style, so all staff can reach their full potential.

3. The information is sourced from stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey_HOTP2013.aspx

1.3

Toolkit components

