**Employers for Disability NI**

# 2023 Annual Report of Activities

In 2023 we have continued to deliver a range of services for our member employers, their disabled employees, managers and colleagues. There has been a high demand for tailored training sessions, both online and face-to-face.

We would like to thank our member employers for their ongoing support and commitment to disability good practice.

**1.0 Member Support Services**

## a) Disability Advice Line

This is a core part of the service for member employers and their employees. We have answered many queries from disabled employees, line managers and colleagues. Given the diversity of disabilities and the nature of employment, there was a huge range in the types of issues raised. The following are just some examples:

* Software and other adjustments for dyslexic person
* Supporting employee with anxiety
* Advising employer of adjustments for employee with anxiety
* Advice and support for employer and employee with back condition
* Advice and support for employer and autistic employee
* Advice on disability survey
* Advise on adjustments for employee with hearing loss
* Supporting autistic staff
* Advice for ADHD person
* Disability Positive language
* Stress management advice and sleep good practice
* Managing milestones and making adjustments for trainee with neurodiverse and mental health diagnosis
* Supporting ADHD employee
* Signposting to neurodiversity assessment
* Representation of disabled people amongst economically active (statistical query)
* Advice and detailed comments on neurodiversity awareness resource
* Good practice in recruitment and selection
* Information on resources around stress management
* Information on the hidden disabilities resource (Sunflower Lanyard)
* Advice on supporting someone with hearing loss
* Advice on redeployment options for employee with physical disability
* Signposting to Access Auditor
* Ongoing support and advice for autistic person
* Signposting to assessment, equipment and software for dyslexic person
* Signposting to assessment, equipment and software for person with

hearing loss

* Information for person needing Workable/AtW support
* Help for person with learning disability seeing work placement
* Advice on supporting clients with social complexities – this will be

ongoing

* Advice for autistic person with multiple physical conditions and manager
* Advice and information on assessments for neurodivergence
* Information on Workable and sources of support for disabled employees
* Information on the recruitment of disabled people
* Advice on redeployment of an employee with MS
* Assistance with a query around hybrid working as an adjustment
* Adjustments, performance and probation extension
* Review of ongoing working practice and adjustments for person managing multiple disabilities
* Adjustments, performance and probation extension for person with hearing loss
* Review of ongoing working practice and adjustments for person managing multiple disabilities
* Adjustments for recruitment of a non-verbal autistic person
* Adjustment templates
* Advice on adjustments for person returning to work following cancer diagnosis
* Support for disabled person with mental health condition, re flexible working
* Signposting for dyslexia support
* Advice for supporting disabled employees during redundancy
* Advice for supporting employee with anxiety
* Advice for interview panel on interviewing person with memory difficulties
* Signposting and information on Workable support
* Advice on good practice, re disability absence management

## b) Employee Support and Resolution Service

Employers for Disability NI provides a free, confidential resolution service employing mediation and conciliation approaches. This involves consulting with all key parties (line manager, disabled employee, HR, OH as required), facilitating discussion and advising on how issues may be resolved. This practice is informed by adjustments, disability positive practice and a balanced approach. Depending on the complexity of the issue, this can be done via telephone, email or in face-to-face meetings. The key aim of the service is to support managers, colleagues and disabled employees to avoid disability discrimination and facilitate a problem-solving approach. This is a unique service and is only available to Employers for Disability NI member employers.

## c) Disability Positive Accreditation

This was launched in June 2022 and to date eight organisations have achieved accreditation. This is an ongoing initiative with more employers currently engaged in the process.

## d) Website

Many news articles, information and links to resources were added throughout

the year to the website, including information about managing staff wellbeing

and supporting disabled employees whether following working in the office,

home or hybrid model. Ongoing updates will ensure this is a valuable source

of information to member employers and others.

## e) Member Update Bulletin

Following each Board Meeting, update bulletins have been sent to member

employers to ensure they are aware of our ongoing programme of activities.

## f) Member News and Information Updates

Members have received regular email updates to inform them about resources, stories of interest, videos, case studies, member activities etc.

## g) Jobs Bulletin Board

This is a popular web page on our website. Many vacancies have been added and circulated to disability organisations over the past year.

## h) Mind & Body Service

Our social enterprise, Mind & Body Therapy, offers therapeutic massage and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to member employees and the public at a discounted rate or free of charge when part of a funded programme. All income is donated to Employers for Disability NI.

## i) Supporting Members’ Initiatives

Staff participate in a number of members’ working groups and disability-related events on request.

**j)**  **One-to-One Coaching**

## We offer one-to-one coaching sessions based around the Stress Management Inventory and several of these sessions took place with member employees.

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**2.0 Events**

## a) Training/Awareness Events

There were 53 sessions delivered to organisations over the past year. The majority of these have been free to members as part of their membership and it is great to see members benefitting from this. All sessions were tailored to suit members’ requirements.

* 17 January, NICS, Disability Positive
* 19 January, BBC, Neurodiversity
* 24 January, NW Regional College, Neurodiversity (face-to-face)
* 26 January, BBC, Being Disability Positive Manager
* 30 January, Mid-Ulster, Neurodiversity
* 30 January, BBC, Hidden Disability
* 31 January, NICS, Sleep
* 8, 9, 10 February, Mental Health First Aid, first assessed delivery
* 14 February, NICS, Hearing Loss
* 21 February, NICS, Managing and Supporting Colleagues with

Mental Health Issues

* 21 February, WHSCT, Disability Awareness
* 23 February, Mid-Ulster, Learning Disability
* 28 February, NIHE, Hidden
* 7 March, NICS, ADD, ADHD, Dyspraxia
* 9 March, Mid-Ulster, Disability Positive Recruitment
* 9 March, NIHE, Reasonable Adjustments for Service Users
* 14 March, NICS, Dyslexia and Dyscalculia
* 14 March, NIHE, Neurodiversity
* 21, 22, 23 March, Mental Health First Aid (second assessed delivery)
* 24 March, NICVA, Sleep Better for Life
* 28 March, Western Health and Social Care Trust, Disability Awareness
* 28 March, NIHE, Learning Disability – Promoting Employment Opportunities
* 29 March, UU, Disability Positive Training and Accreditation
* 4 April, North West Regional College, Neurodiversity
* 5 April, Mid-Ulster, Autism (x 2)
* 18 April, QUB, Neurodiversity
* 19 April, UU Hearing Loss
* 25, 26, 27 April, Mental Health First Aid (third and final assessed delivery)
* 28 April, WHSCT, Disability Awareness
* 11 May, BBCNI, Stress Less (x 3)
* 15 May, NICVA, Disability Positive
* 23 May, QUB, Neurodiversity
* 31 May, BBC, Coping with Anxiety
* 16 June, NICS, Disability Positive
* 21, 22 & 23 June, Mental Health First Aid - open course
* 28 June, SHSCT, Neurodiversity
* 7 Sep, Neurodiversity & Autism, DfC, 1hr face-to-face
* 19 Sep, Neurodiversity, SHSCT, 2hr
* 22 Sep Disability Awareness, WHSCT, Enniskillen, 1.5 hr face-to-face
* 4 Oct, Sleep Better, BCC, 1.5hr
* 5 Oct, Disability Awareness, NICS, 1.5hr
* 17 Oct, ADHD & Dyspraxia, NICS, 1.5hr
* 18 Oct, Disability Awareness, BCC, 3.5hr, face-to-face
* 19 Oct, Neurodiversity, UAT, 2hr, face-to-face
* 20 Oct, Disability Awareness, QUB, 2hr
* 24 Oct, Managing & Supporting Colleagues with Mental Health Issues, BCC, 2hr
* 10, 17 & 24 Nov, Mental Health First Aid – open course, 12hr
* 16 Nov, Hearing Loss, UU, 1.5hr
* 21 Nov, Disability Awareness, WHSCT, 2.5hr
* 23 Nov, Neurodiversity, QUB, 2hr
* 28 Nov, Disability Positive, NICS, 4.5hr
* 5 Dec, Reasonable Adjustments, SHSCT, 1.5hr
* 6 Dec, Supporting autistic people - member good practice, 1.5hr

## b) Training/Awareness Events Attended

* MHFA Zoom - shadow for training purposes
* Irene Lyon Anxiety Workshop
* Understanding eating disorders and developing communication skills
* Aware Ireland: Gut-brain axis: How diet can be used in association with conventional therapies to improve outcomes
* Impact of Relationships on Physical & Mental Health
* The Pension’s Trust Webinar
* Eating Disorders Awareness, Eating Disorders NI
* Inclusive Communication, Business Disability Forum
* CBT - several courses have been undertaken as part of CPD
* Understanding self-harm
* Suicide awareness

### 3.0 Administrative Matters

**a) Fundraising Initiatives:**

**Head Injury Support Newry:** We have linked with Head Injury Support for a two-year project supporting the mental health of head injury survivors and carers.

**Charity Partnership with Belfast Solicitors’ Association**

We were delighted to be the charity partner for the Belfast Solicitor’s Association. There was a calendar of events/fundraising activities and staff were in attendance at a number of these throughout the year:

* 16th March: Pub Quiz
* 27th April: Walking tour of Belfast
* 30th April: Belfast City Marathon
* 12th May: BSA Annual Golf Day
* 10th June: 80th Anniversary Gala Dinner at Belfast City Hall
* 16th September: Sponsored Walk

**Kilbroney Vintage Rally:** Staff volunteered at this event along with several other charities and we were delighted to receive a charity donation as a result.

**b) Board Membership**

A sincere word of thanks is due to the Board Members, drawn from across our membership, who have provided ongoing support for Employers for Disability NI staff, generating ideas and bringing enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the organisation. Without their assistance, the work of this organisation would not be possible.

We are very sorry that John Gow has had to resign from the Board as he has moved from NI Ambulance Trust to a new post. We thank him for his dedication and contribution over many years and wish him every success in the future.

**c) Lead Partnership**

We were delighted to welcome a sixth Lead Partner, Ulster University, and

are excited to support the university in its work to support disabled employees

and students.