

# Career path

## Helping you get further

*Fixer:  
should I tell  
our director's  
team about his  
cancer?*

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### Masterclass

## How to recruit a disabled candidate



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A candidate with a disability is not difficult to recruit, train or promote, provided they are given the same opportunity as other candidates, and they can see that this will be the case. There is a great vogue at the moment to almost excuse discriminatory behaviour as unconscious bias, but most of the discrimination disabled candidates face is not unconscious – instead, it reflects a lack of thought about, and discussion with, that employee.

One of the most common mistakes employers make is assuming they know more about the disability in question than the candidate. Don't worry about whether or not the job is too stressful, the travel too burdensome or the hours too long – talk to the candidate. Don't be afraid to ask them if they face challenges in the workplace, what these are and how you can help alleviate them.

Rather than viewing 'diversity and inclusion' as an HR issue, think about the culture of your organisation. Do all managers and recruiters

have experience of or training in working alongside colleagues with disabilities? Have they understood what adjustments the organisation has made for other workers – and do they know what they are able to offer? Are they trained to be flexible in their attitude to work and building a team?

While there is a great drive at the moment to disclose a disability, if the disability doesn't affect the job an employee is doing day-to-day, why mark it as a 'difference'? All jobs come with a person and job specification, so HR and hiring managers should focus on discovering

### **"Ask about the challenges they face, and how you can alleviate them"**

whether a potential recruit fulfils those specifications. If there is something within the role that will be affected by that person's disability, then, in the context of that job, discuss what the practical issues might be and solve them. Don't spend an unnecessary amount of time focused only on a stated disability or health

condition. You'll end up failing to discover the many and varied talents of the person in front of you.

When it comes to retention, ask yourself: what do you do for everyone else? You have solved the practical issues and the reasonable adjustments that might be needed to manage a candidate's disability on a daily basis – now they're just 'another member of staff'. How do you develop employees? How do you integrate people into a team? How do you spot candidates for promotion across the organisation? A good manager will sit down with their team member, identify

areas that need work and help to develop those areas. This should be no different when chatting to a candidate who has a disability.

Above all, don't assume you know more about your employee or interview candidate than they do. Make sure you talk, communicate, listen and learn.

### Taking it even further

↳ **Use**  
Business Disability Forum's toolkit for retaining disabled employees (free to members and partners, and available to buy) [bit.ly/BDFtoolkit](http://bit.ly/BDFtoolkit)

↳ **Review**  
*People Management* investigates why 'Employers are biased against the disabled' [bit.ly/PMdbias](http://bit.ly/PMdbias)

↳ **Access**  
Remploy's workplace mental health support service – Access to Work [bit.ly/RemploySupport](http://bit.ly/RemploySupport)



↳ **Watch**  
Kara Tointon's documentary on dyslexia, *Don't Call Me Stupid*, shown on BBC3 and BBC1 [bit.ly/dyslexiadoc](http://bit.ly/dyslexiadoc)