LEARN HOW TO MAKE YOUR RECRUITMENT PROCESS MORE ACCESSIBLE

A Guide To Digital Inclusion For Recruiters

By Recite Me And Guidant Group

Learn How To Make Your Recruitment Process More Accessible

There are more than two million disabled people of working age in the UK.

The disability employment gap (the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people) is over 30 per cent. However, many more disabled people are facing barriers that are stopping them from entering the workplace.

They form a large pool of relatively untapped talent for employers which should be tapped into at this time, when so many organisations and industry sectors are reporting skills shortages.

Digital technology has now become central to the recruitment process. Evidence shows inaccessible online and digital communications are preventing disabled jobseekers flourishing in the recruitment process.

This guide will help you to identify the digital barriers for disabled jobseekers in your recruitment process and give you the knowledge to make it more accessible.

Act now if you don't want to miss out on disabled talent

The recruitment process now relies heavily on digital technology, from online job adverts on both websites and social media platforms, to online application forms and skills assessments.

If any part of your organisation's digital recruitment journey is inaccessible for disabled jobseekers then you will miss out on hiring disabled talent.

For example, the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI) worked in conjunction with online diversity and recruitment resourcing platform VERCIDA to produce the 2017 RIDI candidate survey of 200 disabled jobseekers. The results showed:

- 75% of the disabled jobseekers surveyed find their condition has an impact on job hunting
- 54% find hurdles at multiple stages of the recruitment process
- 28% find online assessments challenging

Ensure your organisation complies with disability discrimination law

Clearly inaccessible online and digital tech can stop organisations recruiting disabled talent, which is reason enough to make sure your recruitment process is accessible.

It's also worth noting that under The Equality Act (2010) all employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled jobseekers and employees so they can enjoy as similar an experience to non-disabled people as possible.

Use inclusive web design to meet WCAG standards as a minimum requirement

You should always use inclusive design when designing websites, web content or any other digital content for your recruitment process.

This will help you ensure that assets like your online application forms and skills assessments are accessible to the widest possible audience.

The British Standards Institute (2005) defines inclusive design as: *"The design of mainstream products and/or services that are accessible to, and usable by, as many people as reasonably possible... without the need for special adaptation or specialised design."*

As the definition suggests, inclusive design doesn't mean that a product or service will necessarily be accessible to everyone, but it should cater for the needs of many people as reasonably possible.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which is the web's governing body, has produced Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) that you can follow to use inclusive design and make your online and digital communications accessible.

The guidelines form a list of clear points to follow to make sure that web sites and other digital communications are accessible to the widest possible audience.

There are three levels of compliance to the standards, which are designed to meet the needs of different groups of people in varying situations: A (lowest), AA, and AAA (highest).

As a minimum requirement, all your online and digital communications design should meet the AA standard.

Web and graphic designers and digital design agencies with experience of designing using inclusive design will be able to help you learn and apply the guidelines.

Make your social media profiles as accessible as possible

It's no secret that most employers now use social media to recruit candidates and most jobseekers now use social media to search for jobs, so it's vital for recruiters to take full advantage of this trend and reach the widest possible audience through social media channels.

Social media platforms now have accessibility settings and accessibility best practice tips you can use to make sure your social media profiles and the content you share on them is accessible.

Twitter

The first and most important point here is to make sure that all images have alt text tags. Alt text tags are embedded into images and designed so that they give a description of what's in the image to people with sight loss by allowing the assistive tech they are using to read out a description of the image to them.

You can do this by going into the settings on your Twitter account and turning on alternative text for images.

To do this go to Settings and privacy > Accessibility > turn on Compose image descriptions.

Facebook

Again, alt text tags for images are vital. Facebook adds machine-generated alt text automatically that you can edit yourself. This doesn't offer as much rich detail as well-written alt text tags written by a human, so when you post images you should add alt text tags and include descriptive text in the copy in the post.

To add your own alt text tags to an image select a new post as you would do normally, select Photo/Video, select the photo you want to add, and click Edit Photo. Then click Alt Text. The automatically generated alt text will be shown on the left side of your photo. Click Override generated alt text to edit it and write your alt text in the box.

Descriptive text explains the content of the image and a well-written description can supplement the all text for an image. Your descriptive text should start with ALT: followed by the text (e.g. 'ALT: descriptive text). It should be placed under the main copy in your post.

You should also add captions to videos. You can do this by adding a caption file, or you can upload your videos to YouTube first and add captions in the process, then share the videos on Facebook.

We recommend you like Facebook's Accessibility page and follow @fbaccess on Twitter for updates on any new Facebook accessibility features.

LinkedIn

As of date of publishing this guide we are not aware of any specific accessibility settings you can use on LinkedIn, including your company LinkedIn pages.

However, the main things to consider are alt text tags for images and making sure that any digital communications that you send potential jobseekers to (e.g. your website) are accessible.

You can learn more from this blog post about accessibility settings and best practice.

Add accessibility software to your website

You can enhance the candidate experience and make it more inclusive for disabled candidates by adding some type of web accessibility software to your website.

Web accessibility software provides another layer of accessibility by adding more accessible features to allow disabled people to access your website in the way that works best for them.

Recite Me has a unique combination of features that can help a range of job applicants with different types of disabilities.

It has a range of features that allow disabled people to customise your site the way they need it to work for them. For example, it lets disabled people adjust things like font sizes and colours, customise the background colour and read text aloud (including PDFs).

As well as removing barriers for disabled job applicants, Recite Me can also make your recruitment process more inclusive by translating your website's content into over 100 languages.

Carry out user testing. Get feedback. Make necessary changes

It's crucial that you carry out some kind of user testing to validate that your online and digital communications are accessible.

This will require getting a range of people with different disabilities to carry out a number of different tasks using your website and other digital communications, including things like filling out job application forms and completing online assessments.

You can organise this user testing yourself, for example by holding testing open days, or you can use an organisation like AbilityNet, the UK's leading charity on digital accessibility.

Once you have gathered the feedback from user testing you can analyse the data and pass the findings back to your design team.

They can then carry out the necessary development work to eliminate any barriers for disabled users and ensure your online and digital recruitment communications are accessible to the widest possible audience.

Your checklist

- ✅ **Act now if you don't want to miss out on disabled talent**
- ✅ **Use inclusive design and meet WCAG standards as a minimum requirement**
- ✅ **Make your social media profiles as accessible as possible**
- ✅ **Add accessibility software to your website**
- ✅ **Carry out user testing, get feedback, make the necessary changes**

Recite Me

100's of organisations already use Recite Me to make their websites more accessible to everyone – book your free demo now.

http://www.reciteme.com

Guidant Group

Guidant Group are outsourced recruitment experts – talk to them today about your hiring needs. Guidant are on a journey to proactively promote disability inclusion, not only within Guidant but through their client programmes and influence in the wider recruitment industry.

http://www.guidantgroup.com/