



Down
Syndrome
Ireland



YOUR GUIDE TO EMPLOYING A PERSON WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Dear Employer,

Thank you for making a step towards a more inclusive workplace. In this booklet you will find a guide on how to recruit, train and hire someone with Down syndrome.

We will work alongside you and your new employee while we prepare for recruitment, onboarding and continued development.

Together with you, we can give people with Down syndrome the opportunity to secure meaningful employment, by helping them learn the necessary skills to succeed. Business corporate partners like you play a central role in helping achieve these outcomes.

We look forward to working with you throughout this process, should you have any questions or need additional supports please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,

Aoife Gaffney
**Head of Employment,
Down Syndrome Ireland**

FAQ ABOUT THE HIRING PROCESS

What are our aims at Down Syndrome Ireland?

- Promote inclusion in society and the workplace
- Enhance capacity in adults with Down syndrome to participate fully in society
- Develop beneficial relationships with employers which will help promote inclusion in society
- Develop wider opportunities for meaningful employment for adults with Down syndrome

What are the benefits of employing an adult with Down syndrome?

- Companies who employ people with Down syndrome report that those employees are committed and motivated, and often only need an opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities
- Working alongside a person with Down syndrome can enrich the wider workforce and benefit a company in diverse and unique ways
- Research shows that employers who employ people with Down syndrome report a high level of commitment and motivation from those employees, who often just need the chance to demonstrate their capabilities
- Increased loyalty and lower turnover when you employ a person with Down syndrome

What are the benefits to the person with Down syndrome?

- Helps improve confidence, increase social connectivity and promotes integration in community
- Gives the person an opportunity and the ability to contribute to local community
- Becoming a valued member of society
- Securing a meaningful role in the workplace

FAQ ABOUT THE HIRING PROCESS

How will Down Syndrome Ireland support you?

- Inclusive workplace training for your company
- Education and awareness of working with a person with Down syndrome
- Awareness of diversity within the workplace
- Specific Personal Development and Pre-Employment Training to adults with Down syndrome
- Collaboration with each individual to create a 'task list' of jobs and a role suitable within your company

What do Down Syndrome Ireland ask from employers?

Training: That is specific to the job for the adult with Down syndrome

A Mentor: Provide a link person within your organisation who will carry out this training and act as a point of contact for the adult with Down syndrome in case of any questions/help needed

Paid work: We kindly ask that all individuals hired to work in your organisation are paid the full minimum wage/salary.

Adults with Down syndrome have differing abilities and strengths just like everyone else at work. As part of our National Employment Programme, we have supported adults with Down syndrome working anywhere between 2-21 hours per week. We can discuss this with you in more detail.

Please note there is a **wage subsidy scheme** available for an employer who employs a person with Down syndrome for a minimum of 15 hours per week. For more information, visit:

<https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment-and-disability/wage-subsidy-scheme-for-people-with-disabilities/>

DSI General Employment Process Overview

DSI General Employment Process Overview

- 1. Virtual Meeting:** Held between Down Syndrome Ireland and potential employer to discuss our National Employment Programme and answer any questions you may have
- 2. Site Visit:** To carve out job role and discuss suitable tasks, days, and times of work. We will facilitate writing job specs for any role
- 3. Advertise:** Position is advertised with Down Syndrome Ireland members over 18 years through email and social media.
- 4. CVs:** Once CVs are received, we conduct pre-employment and pre interview training with all candidates online. This will prep for interview, boundaries at work, communication, how to present yourself at work (hygiene, clothes etc). Employers are given prepped interview questions and CVs prior to interview.
- 5. Interviews:** Generally, all candidates go forward for interview (unless we receive a high level of interest). It is a good life skill to sit an interview, so we like to give all candidates this opportunity. We facilitate the interview with the employer to ensure adequate support. At times we can also job match an adult to the specific role if preferred
- 6. Training & Mentorship:** DSI carry out "Down syndrome Awareness Training" with the staff team. A Mentor is selected to support, train and supervise the new employee with Down syndrome.
- 7. Support:** Once your new employee begins work, we will provide support around drafting contracts, task lists, and ongoing support to ensure the job continues to run smoothly for you and your new employee. If issues arise we are at the other end of phone/email to support also – no query/concern is too big/small.

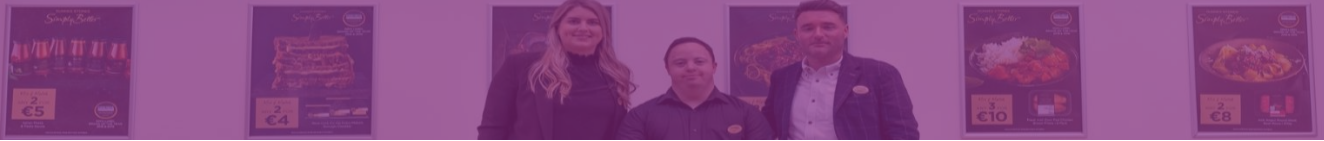


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HOW TO BEST INCLUDE A NEW STAFF MEMBER WITH DOWN SYNDROME

DUNNES STORES



Types of Roles / Industries

- **Office Admin:** Support of all departments in delivering post, stocking materials, shredding and other general tasks, meet and greet, reception, facilities
- **Pharmaceutical :** General Operatives, IT department support, Warehouse assistant, deliveries management
- **Retail:** Labelling, stock rotation, customer service, stocking shelves, orders
- **Marketing:** Preparation of promotional packs, support at events, stocking marketing material, preparing deliveries and internal reporting
- **Hospitality:** Food & Beverage, bar work, accommodation, front of house guest services
- **Leisure Centre:** Greet customers, sweep pool deck, assist with organisation of swimming lessons, tidy dressing rooms, test water, check guests into pool/gym/lessons
- **Cinema/Theatre:** Guiding guests to seats, customer service, front of house welcoming guests

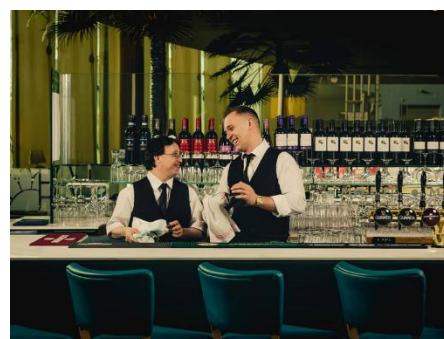
What works:

- **Close management** on a daily basis
- List of **specific tasks** & schedule to be followed
- **Breakdown** of tasks into individual steps
- **Explain** every step in detail
- Gradually give more **independence** on tasks
- Provide **constant feedback** on work
- Be **observant** of special signs, if the person needs a break or just wants to share a personal story
- Give time to **talk through questions** that may arise
- **Check regularly** how the person is doing
- **Encourage completion** of assigned tasks each day



Facts to take into consideration:

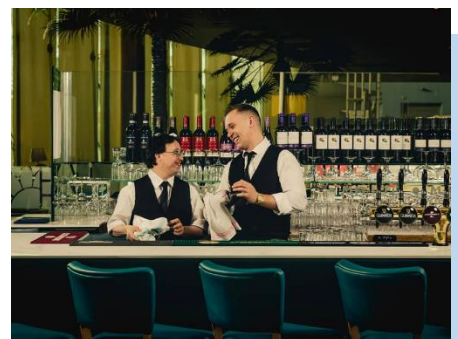
- **Interdepartmental focus:** While being assigned to one department, there is work in every department that can be done by the person, matching the skills the person has, with the needs of the department
- **Difficulties** encountered during tasks might not always be communicated, which requires that staff are attentive to support needed
- **Office protocol** and line management are sometimes difficult to understand. Ideas need to be discussed first within each department and with the direct manager, as the company works more efficiently when the structures are respected
- The **highly structured way of working** can be beneficial for many tasks but can be challenging at times, when flexibility is required (prior discussion and explanation is essential)
- **Interaction** and **variety** are important to keep motivation levels and avoid boredom
- **Friendship** between colleagues are highly valued, as well as an openness to sharing personal/family life stories and achievements
- **Positive feedback**, feeling that the work done is important and that they are part of a team is key to work satisfaction and motivation





Conclusion and Recommendation:

- If you are considering employing a person with Down syndrome, fear and uncertainty is normal. We are here to support you & your potential new colleague throughout your journey.
- Our Employment Team will provide adequate training in advance, to ensure the best positive experience and outcome for both parties
- Some thought should be given to the roles for the new member of the team. The work has to be real, the tasks taken on are tasks others would have to do if your new member of the office was not there
- While more time has to be given to support the new team member, the benefits can all be clearly seen. Meaningful work not only has direct benefits to the person with Down syndrome, but their wider family too.
- It is important to start small – with hours & tasks. Over time we will help you and your new employee to progress at work.
- We look forward to working with you – our contacts details are at the end of this pack.





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Testimonials

Swan Leisure Centre, Rathmines

Conor Byrne has been working as a Leisure Centre Assistant at Swan Leisure since July 2018.

Here's what Operations Manager Gregg Gannon had to say about Conor at work: *"Conor is an inspiration to both members and guests. He is a fulfilment of our philosophy at Swan Leisure of inclusion and breaking down barriers to participation."*

Here's what Conor had to say about his job: *"I love the company and having work buddies to chat to. Everyone in the swan centre is nice and friendly and they look out for me. I think I do a very good job - I keep the pool deck cleaned and I clean the gym. I would advise someone with Down Syndrome to get a job because you will learn new skills and responsibilities and you will achieve."*

Walkers Global Law Firm

Linda works in Walkers Global Law Firm as part of the Mailroom & Facilities Team.

Here's what Linda's Supervisor Richard Murphy had to say about Linda at work: *"Linda is a valued member of the Mailroom and Facilities team and she always has a positive outlook with no task being too great or too small. Linda's energy and commitment is admirable"*

Here's what Linda had to say about her job: *"Walkers is absolutely brilliant and I love it! The staff are so nice. I really have found my dream job!"*

Employment Team

Please reach out to any member of the employment team for support on any aspect of our National Employment Programme.

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