



# Workplace Accessibility Toolkit

A guide for the games industry, created by Safe In Our World in collaboration with Easy Surf and Radderss

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## Why is workplace accessibility important?

**Workplace accessibility is about ensuring that everyone has equal access, and opportunity, to participate in work and achieve their goals.** There are various legal definitions and requirements across different territories, but there are many ways that employers can go above and beyond these requirements to foster truly equitable environments.

**There isn't just an ethical case for workplace accessibility, either (though that is a huge part of it!) – it makes business sense, too.** [A survey by the Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) found that employers identified several benefits from making workplace accommodations, including:

- Retaining valuable employees
- Improving productivity and morale
- Reducing workers' compensation and training costs
- Improving company diversity

**Many employers are wary of workplace accommodations because they assume they will have high costs. This isn't true.** In the same JAN report, 56% of employers reported spending *literally nothing* – \$0 – on implementing accommodations. Only 7% reported ongoing costs associated with accessibility, with the rest being made up of one-time expenses. In addition, your government may have schemes to support with these costs.

## About the toolkit

This workplace accessibility toolkit aims to provide guidance around what accessibility can look like across different organisations, as well as signposting to further information and support. It will cover hiring, onboarding, and training; day-to-day job functions; and the social aspects of work. **At the end of each section you will find links to further resources about specific suggestions or topics, where relevant, so you can learn more about implementing them.**

## Where to start

Accessibility can be overwhelming. It's essential not to allow this to prevent you from starting *somewhere*. This toolkit provides information and guidance suitable to companies of all sizes. You don't need to do everything straight away: perhaps start by looking through this toolkit and identifying the "easy wins."

## The importance of feedback

**One of the best – and most cost-effective – ways to understand your accessibility needs and priorities is to gather feedback.** To do this, you should start by creating a feedback mechanism. Consider appointing an accessibility champion or committee (more on that later!) Gather feedback through accessible channels like anonymous surveys, a dedicated email, or regular group meetings. Respond quickly to feedback, ideally within 48 hours, and provide a clear timeline for any actions you'll take. Be transparent and personalise your responses, ensuring ongoing communication. Finally: organise, document, and act on the feedback, measuring your progress regularly.

## Feedback mechanism resources

- [Comparison of Feedback Software](#)

- [Assessing Your Accessible Feedback Mechanisms](#)

## Section 1: Hiring and Onboarding

### Job Descriptions and Advertisements

The very first step when it comes to inclusive hiring practices is writing the job description and advert. Some organizations will have “standard” job description formats and phrasing, however it’s important to consider adapting these as needed rather than accepting them without question. Some disabled people may be put off from applying for a job because they believe - often from experience - that accommodations will not be made throughout the recruitment process. The following are some examples of ways you can ensure your job description champions inclusivity and encourages disabled applicants.

**Make it clear in your job advertisement that you are committed to inclusive hiring practices.** Explain how applicants can request adjustments. This is often achieved through a “DE&I” or “Equal Opportunities” statement, which outlines the company’s commitment to inclusion, and transparently describes the steps they are taking to support applicants.

**Use clear language, and avoid jargon where possible.** This supports applicants in understanding exactly what the job entails, and can help applicants with neurodevelopmental and neurodivergent disorders, such as dyslexia.

**Be specific about the requirements of the role.** For example, if the role will involve travel, how often will the person be expected to travel? Will it be national or international? Will they be expected to stay in locations overnight? Even if the answer may seem “obvious” or “normal for this type of job”, it can help to explain it explicitly so the applicant can make informed decisions and requests for support around how they will perform these job functions.

**Consider remote and hybrid opportunities.** While many companies have embraced remote and hybrid working, there is still a tendency to advertise office-based roles. Demonstrating flexibility will encourage more applicants who may struggle to attend or access offices. Some disabled and chronically ill people, such as those with autoimmune conditions, may not be able to work in offices at all. This does not mean that they cannot be knowledgeable and valuable members of the team! If there is no genuine need for the role to be office-based, consider advertising it as remote, or offering flexibility with remote working as a reasonable adjustment.

**Think carefully about your essential and desired experience.** Does your role really require 5+ years’ experience? Is it essential that the individual has a degree? In some cases, the answer is yes, but many jobs have ‘standard’ skills and experience requirements that are off-putting or tacitly exclusionary to disabled people. Try to focus on the skills, abilities, and behaviors you want to see in the candidate: not only does this make the process more inclusive, but it fosters a feeling of empowerment and can result in more high-quality, passionate candidates.

**Advertise your job in the right places, such as disability friendly job boards.** This will help your job reach more diverse audiences. You could also consider advertising it within different disability networks on LinkedIn and other social media.

## Interviews and the Candidate Journey

**Provide as much information as possible.** Providing clear information about the interview process can help alleviate anxiety and set disabled candidates up to perform their best. For example:

- providing specific information about the location of the interview will help candidates with accessibility needs plan their route
- providing information about dress code expectations can help to alleviate anxiety and support in preparation
- providing interview questions in advance can help neurodivergent candidates and others who struggle with anxiety, auditory processing, etc. Good practice would be to provide the questions in advance to all candidates.

A “candidate pack” is a great way to outline the recruitment journey for applicants: this can include information about the company and role, links, addresses, photos of the interviewers or locations, accessibility information, information about the length of the interview or tasks required, etc.

**Give clear timelines.** This doesn’t have to be an arduous process, but it can help immensely to give candidates an understanding of when they can expect to hear from you. E.g. “if you don’t hear by X date then you have been unsuccessful,” “interviews will take place between X date and X date” etc.

**Consider adjustments at all stages of the interview process.** Supporting disabled candidates doesn’t just start at the first formal interview. You may need to consider disabled candidates’ needs even when arranging the interview, for example: if a person is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HOH) they may prefer to receive the interview invitation via email (versus a phone call). It’s a good idea to gather this information during the initial application process, so that you can start supporting the candidate straight away. Good practice would be to offer adjustments to candidates, or provide examples, to alleviate any anxieties candidates may have about making the request.

**Check your biases.** Many of our usual assumptions around professionalism and body language can neglect to consider disability. For example, while not making eye contact is generally considered rude or evasive, many Autistic people struggle with eye contact and converse better without it. Or, someone with a physical disability that limits their dexterity in their fingers may be unable to wear a dress shirt; this doesn’t mean they’re dressing unprofessionally or not trying to present themselves their best. Consider putting hiring managers through unconscious bias training before making them responsible for conducting interviews.

**Ensure interviews are consistent and fair.** This will give all candidates the same opportunity to demonstrate their skills and suitability for the role, without the interviewer’s memory, bias, or other factors getting in the way. There are several considerations in implementing a fair interview process, for example, having set questions and set scoring systems, so you’re not relying on subjective opinions.

**Be willing to discuss accessibility and accommodations before and during the interview.** You don’t have to have every detail confirmed, but having a good understanding of the types of support you can offer, and being able to discuss this with a disabled candidate during the

recruitment process, can provide much needed reassurance. This also gives the candidate vital insight into how they will be supported in the role, which is crucial for deciding whether to accept a job offer. You can approach this conversation both as part of the application process (e.g. a text box within the application form, or a request for accommodations to be noted within the application email) or in your initial conversations with the candidate when inviting them to interview.

**Think about how you phrase your questions.** Instead of asking “have you done this before?” consider whether you could ask “how would you do this?” or “how would you approach this situation?” While it may seem like a small detail, our syntax has a big impact on bias and can exclude some candidates who, for whatever reason, may not have been afforded the same opportunities in their past experience. That doesn't mean that they wouldn't be very capable of handling the situation if given the opportunity.

**Consider the need for breaks.** Some people may not be able to sit in an interview for 1-2 hours, or sometimes longer if there is an assessment task or work trial. Conditions like chronic pain, musculoskeletal disorders, and many more can mean people need to get up and stretch, change position, etc. Consider building breaks into longer interviews and assessments, or at least asking candidates whether they might benefit from breaks. Remember that not all disabilities are visible, and some change day-to-day in terms of how they impact a person.

**Be clear about when feedback will be provided, and be specific about the feedback where possible.** While this can be a time consuming part of the recruitment process, it is one of the most important for all candidates, not just disabled ones. Telling someone they're “not the right fit” leaves a lot of questions and can be damaging to a person's confidence. Try using an email template for interview feedback that includes specific sections that can be personalized and expanded on to demonstrate what the candidate did well, and what was lacking that meant they were unsuccessful.

## Onboarding and Training

*Start the employee journey on the right foot!*

**Ensure you have everything you need for the person to be able to do their job** (see the ‘Workplace Accessibility’ section for more on this). If you are unable to get equipment or processes in place by the time your new employee starts, have clear timelines on when these will be available, and what can be done in the meantime to support.

**Consider whether other members of the team will need training or support.** This could be either formal training to expand their knowledge of accessibility or specific disabilities, or just a heads-up or discussion around how your new team member's work day might look different to theirs. This can be a great opportunity to open up a wider discussion around workplace accommodations and highlight the support that is available to all employees, new and old. Remember: it is not a disabled person's responsibility to educate others on their disability. While they may be happy to advise and talk openly about their needs, you may want to consider finding relevant, outside information and resources from places such as an organisation that specialises in that specific disability, etc.

**Be willing to review processes and make changes if needed.** Acknowledge and communicate that accessibility is an evolving process and you will check in periodically with your new recruit to ensure they are getting on well and their accommodations are working. Don't be deterred if



the processes you initially put in place turn out to not be the right fit: every disabled person and every company is different, so there's unlikely to be a "one size fits all" approach.

## Hiring and Onboarding Resources

- [DE&I Statements](#)
- [DE&I Policies](#)
- [Equal Opportunities Statements](#)
- [Advantages of Remote Work for Disabled Employees](#)
- [Candidate Pack Example](#)
- [Making An Interview Accessible for a Deaf or Hard of Hearing \(HOH\) Candidate](#)
- [Examples of Reasonable Adjustments In Interviews](#)
- [Interview Feedback: An Expert's Guide with Examples](#)

## Section 2: Workplace Accessibility

Here we focus on day-to-day accessibility in the workplace. We'll talk about how to include people with disabilities in the creation of your policies; implement accessible communication throughout your organization; provide accommodations and other workplace adjustments; assess the accessibility of software and applications; and talk about disability in an inclusive way. The additional links and resources that you'll find at the end of this section have been separated out into different categories for ease, so make sure to check those sections if there's anything you'd like to learn more about!

### General Workplace Accessibility

**To improve accessibility in the workplace, we need to think outside the box and challenge our previous assumptions.** We should embrace exploring solutions. Sometimes, providing an accommodation may seem impossible at first glance. It's easy to assume that certain needs cannot be met, but this mindset can limit our ability to find effective solutions.

**Speaking to people with disabilities is crucial.** They are finding creative solutions to the barriers they face every day, and they will be able to help find a solution that provides them the access they need and aligns with business objectives. Invite them to help create your accessibility plan. Remember, though, that just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean they are open to sharing. It's best to invite employees to participate on an 'opt-in' basis rather than singling out individuals.

**Consider asking experts.** Apart from paid accessibility consultants, there are often local organizations that provide free assistance to employees who are trying to improve accessibility. See if there's one in your local area.

**Be creative.** The games industry is creative and positioned to become a leader in workplace accessibility. A solution that supports and empowers all employees is always possible!

**Learn about inclusive language.** Language evolves, it's important to also stay updated. Inclusive language is the foundation of an accessible workplace because it shows respect for people with disabilities and acknowledges their full identity. It sets the tone for a supportive and welcoming environment. It's a simple but powerful way to start. *Remember: disabled people are*



*not a monolith and may have differing views on the use of language to describe them or their disability: listen to, and respect, individual choices.*

**Gather information through a questionnaire.** This is a great way to start but there are several things you'll want to consider. Keep responses anonymous to protect privacy and reduce fears of repercussions, though note that anonymity may not always be possible. Use inclusive language, avoid jargon, and focus on the impact of the disability rather than the diagnosis, including questions that cover a range of disabilities with some open-ended ones. Participation should be voluntary with no negative consequences for opting out. Ensure the form is accessible by offering it in multiple formats, and test it with a small group before sharing it with everyone.

**Consider the accessibility of the software and applications that are used in your organization.** Many common workplace tools, like Microsoft products, Google Workspace, Zoom, and Atlassian, have good built-in accessibility. To assess software accessibility, look for a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT), sometimes called an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) or accessibility statement on the product's website and ensure it's up to date. Also, check the software documentation for accessibility and look for user reviews mentioning it.

## Communication

**Communication is essential to effectively operate and include employees.** It's important to set up preferred communication methods for both new and existing employees. The main types of communication include written (like emails and reports), verbal (like phone calls or video meetings), and visual (like presentations and videos). Consider these options to ensure everyone communicates effectively.

**Make documents accessible.** Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, and Apple products are all good options. Always provide documents in multiple formats and use proper headings for accessibility. Use the built-in accessibility checkers and ask for feedback from people with disabilities to ensure everything works well.

**Don't forget presentation slides.** Accessibility checkers are your friend: use them early and often. It will help you ensure your elements are properly marked up, there is a logical reading order, and font size and color contrast is adequate.

**Be careful with PDF.** They need to be properly tagged which can sometimes require expertise. The safest option is to create the document in a word processor, use the accessibility checker, and then export as PDF. Do not print as PDF.

**Email isn't that different.** Use the same approach as documents, descriptive subject lines are helpful, and don't forget to check if your attachments are also accessible.

**Messaging in chats can be fun, so make sure people aren't missing out.** Don't forget to include the alt text if you are uploading a photo. Some messaging platforms have specific functionality for this, or you can write "Alt:" in the message before you upload the photo, and then the description. Try not to use more than 2 or 3 emojis at once, as it can be overwhelming. Here's a [video example of a screen recorder reading out emojis](#).





**Virtual Meetings are important.** Enable captions and transcripts, and record the session to share later. Providing meeting notes or a brief recap in a written format can be very useful. Announce everyone who joins the call and offer a sign language interpreter if needed. For better live captions, use Google Meet or consider using Otter.ai with Zoom.

**Live presentations need some extra thought.** Send the presentation 24 hours in advance and don't forget to describe any meaningful graphics and images.

**Regular check-ins ensure that employees have the support they need to succeed.** This helps address any accessibility challenges early and keeps communication open. Regular conversations can make adjustments easier and keep everyone on the same page.

**Assign work in a way that considers everyone's needs.** Make sure tasks are clear, achievable, and provide the necessary accommodations. Consider creative ways of sharing tasks between employees.

**Offer flexibility in how, when, and where work is done.** Flexibility allows employees to work in a way that suits their needs. This goes a long way for employees with disabilities.

**Never require proof of disability.** It avoids creating unnecessary barriers and stress for the employee. Trusting their disclosure fosters a more supportive and inclusive workplace.

### **Inclusive Language Resources**

- [Scope: Using disability inclusive language in the workplace](#)
- [UN inclusive language resources](#)
- [Federal plain language guidelines](#)

### **Questionnaire Resources**

- [Questions for disability workplace surveys](#)
- [Google Forms Accessibility Guidelines](#)
- [Microsoft Forms Accessibility Guidelines](#)

### **Software and Application Resources**

- [Researching vendors](#)
- [Evaluating proposals and VPATs](#)
- [Testing and validation](#)

### **Document Resources**

#### Microsoft

- [Make your content accessible to everyone](#)
- [Make your content accessible in Microsoft 365 apps](#)
- [Improve accessibility with the Microsoft Accessibility Checker](#)

#### Apple

- [Create accessible documents, spreadsheets, or presentations with Pages, Numbers or Keynote](#)

#### Google

- [Google Workspace user guide to accessibility](#)

## PDF

- [Create accessible PDFs \(Microsoft Support\)](#)
- [Create and verify PDF accessibility \(Acrobat Pro\)](#)
- [PDF Accessibility Checker \(PAC\)](#)
- [PDF Accessibility \(WebAIM\)](#)
- [PDF Accessibility \(The Accessibility Guy\)](#)

## Email Resources

- [Creating accessible email messages](#)

## Messenger and Chat Resources

### Microsoft Teams

- [Make your MS Teams meetings, calls, and messages accessible to people with disabilities](#)

### Slack

- [Accessibility in Slack](#)
- [How to boost accessibility in Slack](#)
- [Personalised accessibility features in Slack](#)

### Discord

- [Accessibility in Discord](#)
- [Further info on Discord accessibility features](#)

## Virtual Meeting Resources

- [Create accessible meetings](#)

### Microsoft Teams

- [Make your MS Teams meetings, calls, and messages accessible to people with disabilities](#)

### Google Meet

- [Google Meet accessibility](#)

### Zoom

- [Language and accessibility features in Zoom](#)
- [Set up live captioning in Zoom](#)

## Presentation Resources

- [Creating accessible presentations](#)
- [Making events accessible](#)

## Workplace Accommodation Resources

- [A to Z of Disabilities and Accommodations](#)
- [Accommodations and retention](#)

- [Reasonable adjustments at work](#)
- [Adjustments in the workplace for individuals with ADHD](#)

## Section 3: Social Accessibility

**You may be wondering “What is social accessibility?”** In the simplest of terms, it is the perception of disabled people in our world, and in this case, the workplace.

Social accessibility isn’t a tangible thing, or a set of regulations that create an instant fix in the environment, it is a dynamic thing that often takes time. Ableism, even the most subtle of types, is prevalent in society as a whole and it will take work to change those perceptions within the workplace.

But that’s not to say this work isn’t important, or isn’t worth the effort. Social accessibility is a core tenant in the overall work towards equality for disabled people. Oftentimes, when just providing disabled employees the assistive technology required to do their job effectively, you start to erode the perception that disabled people are incapable.

There are many different things you can do to make your workplace more socially accessible for your disabled employees.

**Offer a flexible working schedule.** Flexibility in your working hours or location gives disabled employees the ability to change their schedule and accommodate their own disability. Removing the pressure of a rigid schedule can mean a disabled employee requires fewer workplace changes to accommodate their disability, and gives disabled employees more agency over their work.

**The right training is important.** Ensuring the training process is accessible for all is essential to breaking the stereotype that disabled people are helpless. It also means you don’t have to spend as much time on training. Offering training materials in braille, and having a sign language interpreter present for spoken training gives your employees the opportunity to learn at the same pace.

**Unconscious Bias Training.** Not only effective in the hiring process, teaching all your employees how to communicate and work with disabled people goes a long way towards breaking down barriers. All of us have our own unconscious biases, and a longer-term commitment to this training has proven to be effective in the workplace feeling more inclusive, with many minorities in the workplace feeling a greater sense of belonging and respect for their work.

**Speak with your disabled employees.** Disabled employees often feel they’re unheard, especially when their needs are not needed by the majority. When considering a change in the workplace to help your employees, it’s good practice to think about who would most benefit from this change, and speak to them, rather than every employee you have. Consider facilitating an Employee Resource Group for effective communication of workplace issues.

**Embrace assistive technology and an accessible workplace.** Choosing which technology / accessibility you’ll need in your workplace involves a little research, and communication with your disabled employees. Assistive technology can seem daunting when you’re unfamiliar with

it, but the addition of assistive technology in the workplace gives your disabled employees more independence, and enables them to do their work effectively.

**Make your company events inclusive.** Company outings improve motivation, team morale and coworker relationships. But if all your employees cannot take part due to it simply being inaccessible, you can end up reducing morale and motivation for your disabled employees. Vetting the event space for accessibility, ensuring access to quiet spaces and focusing less on physical activities and more on communication and collaboration are simple ways you can make your company outings more accessible.

**Consider alcohol-use at events.** There are so many reasons why someone might choose not to drink at an event, so consider having alcohol-free events or offering plenty of non-alcoholic options. You can see more about this in [Safe In Our World and Take This' Event Safety Guide](#).

Achieving social accessibility can seem like a daunting task, as ensuring social accessibility in your workplace is a process that doesn't end after the first changes. We hope that with this document, and our linked resources, we've helped you with starting that process.

### Social Accessibility Resources

- [Learn more about social accessibility](#)
- [Effective unconscious bias training](#)
- [DEI training and resources](#)
- [More tips for accessibility in the workplace](#)
- [Assistive technology in the workplace](#)
- [Inclusive company events](#)
- [How Employee Resource Groups \(ERGs\) work](#)

## Further Reading

We've got a whole host more resources for you! These are all resources that were either referenced in the creation of this toolkit, or that its authors have found particularly useful.

- [Special Effect](#)
- [AbleToPlay](#)
- [IGDA Game Accessibility SIG](#)
- [ACAS Accessibility at Work](#)
- [Scope Accessibility in Gaming](#)
- [Forbes Building Accessible Workplaces](#)
- [Access to Work \(UK only\)](#)
- [Practical Guide to Accessibility in the Workplace](#)
- [Creating an accessible and welcoming workplace](#)
- [Disability friendly job board example](#)
- [How to write better link text for accessibility](#)
- [How to implement a fair interview process](#)
- [Xbox Accessibility Guidelines](#)
- [Video: How a screen reader reads an accessible vs inaccessible website](#)

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