



**Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta
Acmhainní Daonna**
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí,
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',
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**National Director
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Holly Cairns T.D.

31st May, 2022

PQ 24309/22 To ask the Minister for Health the way that his Department and public bodies and agencies that operate under his remit meet their obligations for reasonable accommodation under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. -Holly Cairns

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question which was sent to the HSE for response. The HSE obligations under the Employment Equality Acts are outlined below:

HSE Recruitment and Selection Function

- The HSE publicises that it is an Equal Opportunities Employer and welcomes applications from candidates from diverse backgrounds and levels of ability.
- Candidates are invited to disclose any reasonable accommodation requirements they may have in engaging with the related processes, or attending for interview. Every effort is made to respond positively to such requests.
- Interview panels receive appropriate training to ensure appointments are made on merit and all recruitment activities are undertaken in an equitable, transparent manner.
- The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) team and the National HR Shared Services function are currently engaged in an in-depth review of the recruitment and selection process using the HSE's Equality Impact Assessment tool.

HSE Training Programmes

- A suite of training programmes is available to all HSE employees with content related to disability awareness, unconscious bias, equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and aimed at improving employees' understanding of key equality legislation.
- The DEI team and the HSE's National Health and Safety function are currently engaged in a review of the Occupational Safety and Health Statutory Training Policy using the HSE's Equality Impact Assessment tool.

HSE Employee Engagement – Survey under Disability Act, 2005: Disability related data

- An annual employee survey is conducted as part of the HSE's work to comply with the Disability Act 2005, inviting employees to disclose a disability and to connect with relevant HSE personnel on individual reasonable accommodation requests.
- Prospective candidates for HSE appointments are also invited to disclose disability and request reasonable accommodation within our initial recruitment and selection processes (as referenced above).



- Existing HSE employees can disclose current or acquired disabilities which arise later in their careers, at any point – and identify reasonable accommodation supports which they require.
- The HSE has established an Expert Panel of staff with a range of diversity characteristics, including a number of staff with disabilities, to provide input to HR equality-proofing work.

HSE Compliance with Disability Act 2005 and other equality related legislation

- Education and awareness of organisational and individual legislative responsibilities is addressed via the HSE's training programmes (see above).
- The HSE reports annually to the National Disability Authority and the Department of Health on the number of employees with disability in its workforce and on strategic and operational commitments to supporting employees with a disability.

HSE events to promote awareness of disability in the workforce, barriers and challenges experienced by our colleagues with disability

- The HSE's annual celebration of International Day for People with Disabilities on 3rd December, incorporating presentations from current employees with disabilities, and discussing their experience of working in the HSE as persons with disability, is promoted across the organisation. This event also highlights contact points for employees seeking reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

HSE work based support for HSE employees with disability

- Additional workplace supports are available to all HSE employees through Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme, National HR, Employee Relations, Workplace Health & Wellbeing, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Coaching, Mentoring & Mediation, and the DEI Team.
- The majority of referrals to the DEI team during the last year from Occupational Health, National HR, Employee Relations, Leadership, Learning and Talent Management and line managers related to reasonable accommodations for individual employees.
- The DEI team offer advice and information to all HSE employees, through which individuals or their line manager can access confidential advice, register concerns, and request assistance with reasonable accommodation requests (this queries function is not exclusive to disability related matters and employees can raise any work related diversity issue of concern).
- Employee individual concerns and complaints can also be registered and escalated through the HSE's Employee Relations Division, National Investigations Unit and Mediation service.

HSE Internships and Training Programmes for individuals with disability

- The HSE has well-established working relationships with disability organisations such as AHEAD, KARE, WALK etc. Collaborative work includes annual Careers Fairs,



supported internship programmes for persons with disability, and internships for graduates with disability.

HSE guidance and policy documentation relating to supporting employees with disability

- The HSE has made available guidance for all managers on organising accessible events and functions.
- The HSE has also issued guidance for line managers and staff on supporting employees who are deaf or have hearing loss in the workplace.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie O'Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marie O'Sullivan
National HR