

## **New disability accreditation mark launched for NI employers**

Employers for Disability NI has unveiled a new Disability Positive Accreditation scheme for local employers to recognise their best practice approach.

The only accreditation of its kind focusing on Disability Positive practice in NI, the mark celebrates employers who recruit and support disabled employees.

Disability Positive Accreditation lasts for three years and those who attain it can be certain they are working to a high standard and are among the best 'Disability Positive' employers in NI.

**Gabrielle Fitzpatrick, Director of Operations at Employers for Disability NI**, said: "We are delighted to be launching such an important initiative. Currently, people with disabilities are at least twice as likely to be unemployed, which is very concerning and something that Employers for Disability NI is determined to change.

"With this new accreditation, we hope it will encourage employers to think differently about disability in the workplace and show them that some of the best employees in terms of work quality, attendance and motivation, have disabilities.

"The process of applying is pretty straightforward. The three As – audit, action and accreditation – are the key steps involved. Those who complete these steps successfully will be recognised as a Disability Positive Employer with AAA status."

There is a one-off fee for employers, for member organisations of Employers for Disability NI the cost is £995 plus VAT and for non-member organisations, it is £1,295 plus VAT.

To clinch accreditation, employers must complete a Disability Positive Audit. This focuses on employment-related disability good practice.

Employers can use this audit to establish areas where they are implementing Disability Positive practice and identify where action is required in order to enhance standards.

Three member organisations; the Education Authority NI, USEL - Ulster Supported Employment & Learning and Ulster University, were granted early access to the accreditation.

**Angela Getty, Section Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Ulster University** commented: "We are delighted to be among the first to achieve this accreditation, our People and Culture Strategy's tagline is 'Achieving Excellence Together' – this accreditation demonstrates that we are creating the conditions and culture to deliver disability equality and inclusion.

"We recognised that the application process for the Disability Positive Accreditation, i.e. the audit, would help us to assess progress in addressing some of our key equality challenges and priorities, particularly in areas that are often overlooked internally.

"Equality, Diversity and Inclusion continues to be a key priority for us at Ulster and this accreditation verifies our commitment to ensuring that we are an open and inclusive institution that celebrates and welcomes disabled people. "

Employers for Disability NI provides advice and information for members and their employees to help them develop policies and practices that promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

A network of employers drawn from across the public and private sector, including BBC Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Civil Service, Openreach and Translink, Employers for Disability NI's members employ more than 20% of the NI workforce.

For more information and to apply for **Disability Positive Accreditation** visit [www.efdni.org](http://www.efdni.org)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About Employers for Disability NI**

Employers for Disability NI is a network of employers—drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors—working to promote training and employment opportunities and accessibility for people with disabilities as employees and customers.

Employers for Disability NI provides advice and information for members and their employees to help them develop policies and practices that promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. To facilitate this, good practice is shared among members, and training & awareness-raising events are organised to equip employers with the necessary knowledge and expertise in this area.