

# 2024 Annual Report of Activities

In 2024 we continued to deliver a range of services for our member employers, their disabled employees, managers and colleagues. There has been a high demand for tailored training sessions, both online and face-to-face, as well as an increase in requests for advice and support.

We would like to thank our member employers for their ongoing support and commitment to Disability Positive Practice.

## 1.0 Member Support Services

### a) Disability Advice Line

This is a core part of the service for member employers and their employees. We have answered many queries from disabled employees, line managers and colleagues. Given the diversity of disabilities and the nature of employment, there was a huge range in the types of issues raised. The following are just some examples:

- Supporting employee with AuDHD and suggestions for next steps and adjustments
- Employee with cancer, return to part-time work
- Dyslexia awareness
- Adjustments for dyslexic employees re interviews and presentations
- Case law around support animals
- Landlord query re adjustments in home
- Adjustments for person with carpal tunnel
- Adjustments for person with hearing loss
- Supporting someone with sight loss and memory issues
- Managing and supporting dyslexic and dyspraxic employee
- Employee managing disability plus health conditions – adjustments, stress management, sleep hygiene, lifestyle and nutrition
- Supporting employee experiencing anxiety
- Advice on supporting a dyslexic employee
- Signposting re hearing loss
- Disability Positive language
- Definition of disability
- Supporting ADD employee
- Information on neurodiversity assessments
- Adjustments for ADHD person for undertaking interviews
- Advice on supporting employee with sight loss
- Redeployment of autistic person who was also dyslexic
- Inclusive language guide
- Supporting carers guidance
- Recruitment guidelines
- Information on neurodiversity assessments
- Advice on supporting person with anxiety and depression
- AuDHD person - advice and support
- Person with physical disability due to a stroke - advice on adjustments and signposting
- Person with learning disability - support in liaising with HR and attendance at adjustment meeting
- Person with anxiety returning to work - advice and support

- Dyslexic person - advice on adjustments and signposting
- Person with hearing loss - advice on adjustments and signposting
- Person with diabetes - risk assessment, signposting
- Person experiencing symptoms associated with menopause - support and signposting
- Redeployment issues and good practice
- Disability-related attendance management advice

#### **b) Employee Support and Resolution Service**

Employers for Disability NI provides a free, confidential resolution service employing mediation and conciliation approaches. This involves consulting with all key parties (line manager, disabled employee, HR, OH as required), facilitating discussion and advising on how issues may be resolved. This practice is informed by adjustments, Disability Positive practice and a balanced approach. Depending on the complexity of the issue, this can be done via telephone, email or in face-to-face meetings. The key aim of the service is to support managers, colleagues and disabled employees to avoid disability discrimination and facilitate a problem-solving approach. This is a unique service and is only available to Employers for Disability NI member employers.

#### **c) Disability Positive Accreditation**

This is an ongoing initiative with more employers interested in becoming accredited. Work is being undertaken to promote this initiative further.

#### **d) Website**

Many news articles, information and links to resources were added throughout the year to the website, including information about managing staff wellbeing and supporting disabled employees whether following working in the office, home or hybrid model. Ongoing updates will ensure this is a valuable source of information to member employers and others. Work has commenced to improve this website and make it more informative and effective.

#### **e) Member Update Bulletin**

Following each Board Meeting, update bulletins have been sent to member employers to ensure they are aware of our ongoing programme of activities.

#### **f) Member News and Information Updates**

Members have received regular email updates to inform them about resources, stories of interest, videos, case studies, member activities etc.

#### **g) Jobs Bulletin Board**

This is a popular web page on our website. Many vacancies have been added and circulated to disability organisations over the past year. We will be seeking funding to develop this page and improve functionality.

## **h) Mind & Body Service**

Our social enterprise, Mind & Body Therapy, offers therapeutic massage and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to member employees and the public at a discounted rate or free of charge when part of a funded programme. All income is donated to Employers for Disability NI.

## **i) Supporting Members' Initiatives**

We support members' working groups and disability-related events on request.

### **NICS**

Staff participated in the NICS Disability Working Group and featured at the NICS event to mark IDPWD and discussed reasonable adjustments.

### **Choice Housing Association**

Staff manned the EFDNI stand at the Choice Housing Annual Employee Conference to share information about EFDNI and the services available to employees. They are new to membership, and this was a great opportunity to meet with employees.

### **Education Authority for NI**

Staff was filmed by the Education Authority for NI for a short video to be presented at their event for school leaders, outlining the support available as a member of Employers for Disability NI.

## 2.0 Events

### a) Training/Awareness Events

There were 72 sessions delivered to member organisations over the past year. The majority of these have been free to members as part of their membership and it is great to see members benefitting from this. All sessions were tailored to suit members' requirements.

Date	Session	Location	Duration
11 December 2023	Disability Awareness	Antrim & Newtownabbey BC	2hr
12 December 2023	Stress Less	NICS	1.5hr
13 December 2023	Neurodiversity	UU	2hr
14 December 2023	Disability Awareness	Antrim and Newtownabbey BC	2hr
09 January 2024	Neurodiversity	NICS	2hr
10 January 2024	Disability Absence	Policing Board	1.5hr
15 January 2024	Dyslexia	QUB	1.5hr
15 January 2024	Neurodiversity	UU	1.5hr
17 January 2024	Hidden Disability	Policing Board	1.5hr
18 January 2024	Hearing Loss	UU	1.5hr
24 January 2024	Disability Positive	UU	4.5hr
25 January 2024	Autism & Dyslexia	NIPSO	1.5hr
31 January 2024	DDA	NIHE	1hr
31 January 2024	Autism	St Mary's University College	1.5hr
06 February 2024	Disability Positive	NICS	4hr
08 February 2024	Autism & Dyslexia	NIPSO	1.5 hr
19 February 2024	Autism & ADD/ADHD	Translink	1.5hr
19 February 2024	Autism & ADD/ADHD	EANI	1.5hr
22 February 2024	Neurodiversity	WHSCOT	2.5hr
23 February 2024	Reasonable Adjustments	BBC NI	1.5hr x 2
28 February 2024	Sight Loss	NIHE	1hr
01 March 2024	Dyslexia, Dyscalculia & Dyspraxia	EANI	1.5hr
05 March 2024	Mental Health Managers	NICS	2hr
05 March 2024	Hearing Loss	EANI	1hr
06 March 2024	Disability Awareness	COPNI	3hr
06 March 2024	Dyslexia	BHSCT	1.5hr
07 March 2024	MHFA Support Needs Workshops	ABC	2hr x 2
11 March 2024	Autism	BHSCT	1.5hr
12 March 2024	Physical Disability	NIHE	1hr
15 March 2024	Reasonable Adjustments	EA	1hr
19 March 2024	Dyslexia, Dyscalculia & Dyspraxia	Translink	1.5hr
25 March 2024	Hidden Disability	NIHE	1.5hr

Date	Session	Location	Duration
26 March 2024	Hidden Disability	NICS	1.5hr
27 March 2024	Disability Positive Training and Accreditation	UU	4.5hr
28 March 2024	Neurodiversity	NICS	2hr
03 April 2024	Reasonable Adjustments	University of Atypical	2hr
09 April 2024	Neurodiversity	Belfast City Council	2hr
18 April 2024	Autism and ADD/ADHD	QUB	2hr
18 April 2024	ADD/ADHD	Belfast HSC Trust	1.5hr
25 April 2024	Mental Health	Belfast HSC Trust	1.5hr
08 May 2024	Dyslexia, Dyscalculia & Dyspraxia	QUB	1.5hr
09 May 2024	Disability Positive Training and Accreditation	UU	4.5hr
22 May 2024	Neurodiversity	Mid Ulster Council	3 hrs
30 May 2024	Neurodiversity	Southern HSC Trust	2hr
06 June 2024	Disability-related Absence	Belfast City Council	1.5hr
11 June 2024	Autism & ADHD	QUB	1.5hr
17 June 2024	Disability Awareness	Southern HSCT	2 hrs
19 June 2024	Disability Positive Recruitment	Business in the Community	1hr
24 - 26 June 2004	MHFA	SEUPB	12 hrs
27 June 2024	Neurodiversity and Case Study Management	QUB	3hr
01 August 2024	Disability Positive Recruitment	Choice Housing	1.5hr
11 September 2024	Disability Awareness	NICS	1hr
12 September 2024	Reasonable Adjustments	Southern HSCT	2hr
12 September 2024	Sleep Better	Belfast CC	1.5hr
18 September 2024	Neurodiversity in the Workplace	BBC NI	1.5hr x 2
01 October 2024	Neurodiversity	NICS	1hr
02 October 2024	Dyslexia & Dyscalculia	NICS	1.5hr
04 October 2024	Reasonable Adjustments	Translink	2hr
07 October 2024	Reasonable Adjustments	NIHE	3hr
22 October 2024	Disability Awareness	Western HSCT	2hr
23 October 2024	ADD & Dyspraxia	NICS	1.5hr
28 October 2024	Reasonable Adjustments	Law Society for NI	2hr
07 November 2024	Disability Awareness	QUB	1hr
12 November 2024	Disability Positive	NICS	4hr
12 November 2024	Neurodiversity	Southern HSCT	1hr
14 November 2024	Neurodiversity	NWRC	1.5hr
19 November 2024	Neurodiversity	Western HSCT	2.5hr
21 November 2024	Autism	QUB	1hr
25 November 2024	Disability Awareness	Belfast CC Councillors	2hr

**b) Training/Awareness Events Attended**

- Equality Commission for NI & Allstate: All about Autism
- Aware NI: ADHD and Mental Health
- Take 5 Ambassador Training
- Trans awareness
- MHFA Refresher Training
- Understanding self-harm and substance misuse
- MHFA Refresher training for trainers
- CBT ongoing training, various courses including OxCADAT –
- Panic Disorder, PTSD,
- CBT-I, Private Practice Guidance, Working Online, Working with Neurodivergent Clients
- Ten Steps to Positive Mental Health, Train the Trainer

### **3.0 Administrative Matters**

#### **a) Fundraising Initiatives:**

Head Injury Support Newry: Many clients from this charity have availed of the MindBody service as part of the Carers', "Time for Me" project.

Kilbroney Vintage Rally: Staff and volunteers supported this event along with several other charities and we were delighted to receive a charitable donation as a result. This donation is always a generous contribution and is very much appreciated.

#### **b) Board Membership**

A sincere word of thanks is due to the Board Members, drawn from across our membership, who have provided ongoing support for Employers for Disability NI staff, generating ideas and bringing enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the organisation. Without their assistance, the work of this organisation would not be possible.

#### **c) New Members**

We are happy to welcome Choice Housing and The Law Society for NI to Membership and look forward to working with them.

#### **d) New Employee**

We are delighted to welcome Gary Spence as a part time Marketing Consultant on a one-year contract and look forward to his input promoting awareness of our services and enhancing our promotional materials and other resources.