

FAQS ON HIRING INCLUSIVELY IN HONG KONG

Many employers starting out in inclusive hiring have questions but worry about asking them aloud: 'What if I offend someone?' or 'Will my question be taken the wrong way?' are common concerns when you are interested in both doing well (as a business) and doing good (for society).

Let's take a look at some frequently asked questions for employers:

WILL HIRING PWDS INCREASE MY INSURANCE COSTS?

People with disabilities (PwDs) are not necessarily constantly sick or in need of medical attention. However, even if a PwD has higher than average medical costs, group medical insurance in Hong Kong can cover people with pre-existing conditions as long as it covers a larger sum of employees, typically 7-10 employee plans or larger. For bigger businesses, it is easier to offset any additional cost on health insurance even for chronically-ill PwDs.

DO EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES HAVE A HIGHER ABSENTEE RATE THAN EMPLOYEES WITHOUT DISABILITIES?

Research has shown that globally & across industries PwDs in fact often have a higher retention and attendance rate than those without disabilities. Absentee rates due to medical reasons can largely be off-set through job accommodations such as flexible work schedules and arranging for remote work.



The Professional Disability Network (PDNHK) is the first platform in Hong Kong to bring disability inclusive employers together in a collaborative effort to increase disability confidence. To learn more about and join the PDNHK, please visit pdnhk.org.

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IS THE PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PWDS EXPENSIVE?

Only a minority of workers with disabilities need special equipment or accommodations and many adjustments cost nothing at all. Studies found that altering work routines, schedules, and assignments as well as modifying work environments were successful as the sole accommodations. A study in the US reported 56% of accommodations cost nothing to implement, while the rest cost an average of US\$500 median benefit was US\$10,000. A study from the Mental Health Commission of Canada found that employers in Canada that recruited, retained and accommodated for neurodivergent employees reaped economic benefits ranging from 2 - 7 times the costs incurred.

CAN PWDS ONLY TAKE ON CERTAIN TYPES OF JOBS?

As with all people, certain jobs may have better synergy with certain individuals. Do your best to refrain from excluding PwDs out of occupations based on your perception of their disability. As the best practices for disability inclusion grows, so too will innovative methods and assistive technologies that enable the inclusion of PwDs to work just as effectively as non-disabled employees. However, it requires expanding out of the traditional mindsets of how work is done, to reconsider how tasks can be carved and achieved.



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ARE THERE EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES ALREADY WORKING IN MY ORGANISATION?

It is likely, because a significant proportion of professionals employed worldwide have invisible disabilities that they choose not to disclose or go undiagnosed. In a 2017 study of US white-collar employees, 30% considered themselves to have a disability, but only 13% had any visible signs of their disability. 61% of the employees in that study had not disclosed their disability to their direct manager, and they were even less likely to disclose their disability to HR (79%).

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