



Supporting employees who have sight loss

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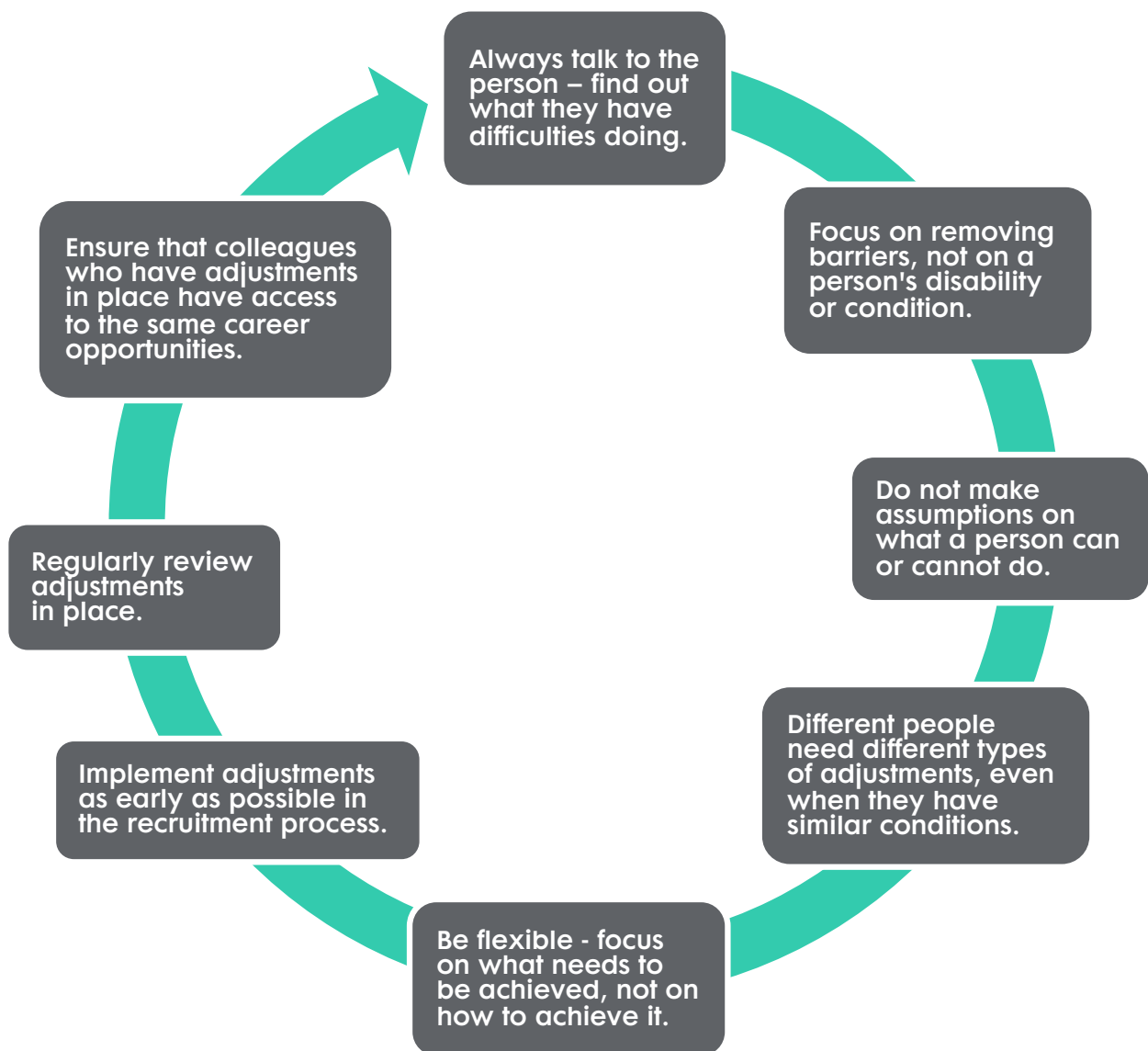


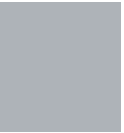
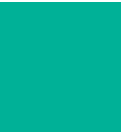


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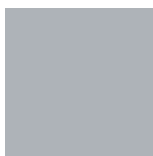
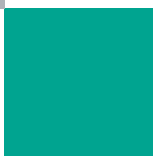
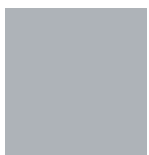
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Making adjustments – top tips





Introduction



This guide aims to give a general introduction to how sight loss might impact someone at work and provide good practice tips on how to support them.

Diagnosis, treatment and cultural perceptions of sight loss may vary between countries. Similarly, legal requirements will also differ: in some countries, sight loss may not be legally recognised as a disability whereas in other countries, people who are blind or have sight loss may be protected by local legislation.

Ensuring that you support candidates and employees with sight loss will help you create a more diverse workforce. It's often the case that when a line manager is confident managing a person with a disability or long-term condition, they become more effective managers for all employees.

Language

Talking about sight loss

Language can be important in creating an open and inclusive workplace for people with sight loss.

In this guide we use the term 'sight loss' as it is widely understood. If in doubt, use the language that the individual uses to describe themselves and avoid placing 'labels' on employees.

Talking about disability

In this guide, we use the term 'disabilities' as used by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) [1] ratified by over 175 countries. The UN CRPD Article 1 provides a definition for 'persons with disabilities':

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

In practice, this could include people with a wide range of impairments or conditions such as dyslexia, cancer, diabetes or sight loss, to name just a few.

Talking about adjustments

Adjustments (in some countries referred to as 'accommodations') remove or reduce the effect of the barriers experienced by candidates and employees with disabilities.

Examples of adjustments might include providing a ramp as an alternative to stairs or an electronic version of paper document so that an employee can use assistive technology to access information. Working hours and locations can be made flexible, and managers can agree different ways to communicate with their employees e.g. over the phone, via email, face-to-face or in writing.

These are small changes that can remove barriers that stop someone from doing their job and can support good performance. In this guide, we refer to these types of changes as 'adjustments'.

[1] United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: [un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html)

What is sight loss?

Sight loss affects the visual acuity and/or the field of vision.

There are many causes of sight loss – some people are born with sight loss, others inherit an eye condition, and some lose their sight as a result of an accident, after illness, or through age.

Visual acuity

Visual acuity allows people to look at objects in detail, describing how clear or sharp the vision is.

Field of vision

The field of vision is the area that people can see without moving the eyes from side to side.

Few people who have sight loss have no vision at all and so your employees may have different levels of vision. For example:

- Blind and partially sighted people.
- People who have no central vision or no side vision.
- People with blurred or patchy vision.

Many people with sight loss can get around, using their remaining vision or using assistance, such as a white cane or a guide dog. The degree and nature of sight loss is specific to the individual and you should not make assumptions about what that might mean for individuals.

There are about 253 million people living with sight loss in the world; 14% are blind and 86% have a moderate to severe impairment [2].

[2] Bourne RRA, Flaxman SR, Braithwaite T, Cicinelli MV, Das A, Jonas JB, et al; Vision Loss Expert Group. Magnitude, temporal trends and projections of the global prevalence of blindness and distance and near vision impairment: as systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Glob Health*. 2017 Sep; 5(9):e888-97.

Internal and external sources of help

There may be sources of help and advice that you can access for detailed information about sight loss in your country. Internally, you should speak to your own manager or to your local Human Resources (HR) team. Your organisation may also have diversity and inclusion officers or a disability liaison officer you can ask for help and advice.

Externally, there may be local organisations that can provide you with expert advice and information about sight loss in your country. The International Labour Organisation's Global Business and Disability Network's website [3] contains some useful information about local requirements and the availability of disability support in countries all over the world.

There may be sources of help and advice that you can access for detailed information about sight loss in your country.



[3] ILO GBDN website: businessanddisability.org/country-profiles/

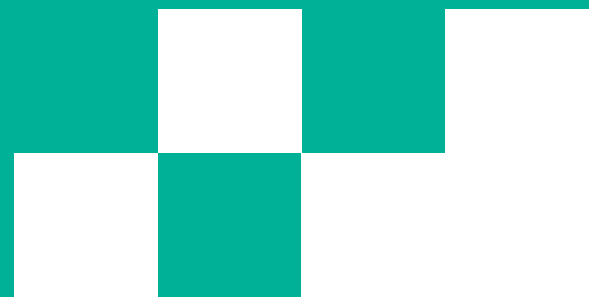


Employing people with sight loss



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11 to 34 are available in the
full booklet.**

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