

Employer practices supporting inclusion

Evidence-informed recommendations based on current practice

Employers across the hospitality and tourism sector are increasingly embedding inclusion by adapting recruitment, job design and support systems to open opportunities to wider talent pools. The following practices, drawn from employer experience, demonstrate effective approaches that can be scaled and sustained across the industry.

Inclusive recruitment and pre-employment engagement



Employers are adapting recruitment practices to attract and support a wider pool of candidates. These approaches can be adopted more widely across the sector to improve inclusion and access to work.

Current practice and recommended approaches:

- Promote inclusivity in recruitment advertising, highlighting flexibility, hourly pay and work-life balance to attract diverse applicants.
- Ensure accessibility in recruitment processes - include questions on adjustments and health to identify support needs early.
- Use practical assessments and engagement activities (e.g. work trials, skills assessments, open afternoons) to allow candidates to experience roles before committing.

“We need to shout more about how flexible hospitality can be - especially for those with families or returning to work.”

“It’s trying to dispel the myth that you can’t have a work-life balance in hospitality.”



- Offer pre-employment programmes and placements with guaranteed interviews to build confidence and understanding of workplace expectations.
- Adopt proactive outreach through schools, charities, Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs), Jobstart and academy programmes to engage underrepresented groups.
- Set goals for inclusion within recruitment strategies and monitor progress over time.

“Speed-dating style job tasters let people try tasks before committing, it reduced dropouts by 50%.”

“We help them fill in forms if literacy is an issue.”

Flexible contracts and scheduling



Employers are introducing greater flexibility and autonomy into scheduling and contract design to meet diverse needs and attract those balancing other commitments.

Current practice and recommended approaches:

- Offer flexible contracts ranging from 4-hour shifts to full-time, enabling individuals to balance work with other responsibilities.

“They submit when they can work, and we match them with shifts - it gives them flexibility and a low-pressure way to re-enter work.”

- Adopt agile scheduling to accommodate childcare, health, and transport needs through part-time shifts, job sharing, or variable start times.



“Person working two 4-hour weekend shifts due to childcare.”

“We’ll change start times so someone can get here using the bus - that’s important to them.”

- Provide options for compressed hours or partial home working, where feasible, to support work–life balance.

“Hospitality needs people on-site, but we offer some home working and compressed hours where we can.”

- Promote workplace flexibility clearly in job adverts and interviews to attract a broader range of applicants.

Personalised role matching and workplace adjustments



Employers are focusing on individual strengths and tailoring roles to ensure success. This personalised approach is critical to supporting retention and job satisfaction.

Current practice and recommended approaches:

- Pre-screen and match candidates to roles that align with their skills, interests, and preferences.
- Adapt duties and use gradual onboarding to support neurodiverse and disabled employees.

“It’s the right person for the job first - then we look at what’s needed to help them succeed.”

“Certain duties he’s not able to carry out... we’re working around his schedule.”

“We look at the individual - start small, then stretch them once they’re ready.”

- Work collaboratively with employees to identify and implement workplace adjustments that enable success.



Structured onboarding and ongoing support



Employers are strengthening early employment experiences to improve confidence, engagement, and retention.

Current practice and recommended approaches:

- Implement buddy systems to provide social and practical support for new starters.
- Gradually increase workload expectations (e.g. in physically demanding roles such as housekeeping) to prevent overwhelm.
- Schedule regular check-ins at 6 and 12 weeks to review progress, wellbeing, and any ongoing support needs.
- Engage employment support workers to guide both employees and managers through adjustment periods.
- Create supportive workplace infrastructure through structured onboarding, clear communication, and early access to wellbeing resources.

“We do a programme, for example, in housekeeping where you have a full week with a buddy.”

“In housekeeping, the number of rooms to be serviced is gradually increased over 4 weeks to the standard complement.”



Partnerships, training and wellbeing



Employers are building inclusive capacity internally and through external collaboration.

Current practice and recommended approaches:

- Partner with charities, schools, and colleges to create inclusive entry routes, placements, and site tours.
- Develop scholarship programmes and job fairs to open pathways to education and attract diverse future talent.
- Train managers in inclusive recruitment, onboarding, and disability awareness using expertise from intermediaries and supported employment organisations.
- Provide wellbeing and mental health initiatives accessible to all staff, regardless of contract type.

“We’re starting small, seeing what’s right for us and for the people they support.”

“That’s our way of supporting people into university who wouldn’t otherwise go.”

“Everyone gets access from day one - casual, fixed term, or permanent.”

- Encourage open dialogue and regular reviews to maintain communication around support and adjustments.



Embedding inclusion and continuous improvement



Employers are integrating inclusion into core values, processes, and sector-wide initiatives.

Current practice and recommended approaches:

- Foster open communication to encourage early disclosure of mental health or accessibility needs.
- Use appraisals and job chats to tailor support and recognise individual progress.
- Participate in sector frameworks such as Diversity Mark and the Opening Doors campaign to share learning and demonstrate commitment.
- Collaborate across the sector to share good practice, learn from peers, and strengthen collective inclusion impact.
- Continuously evaluate and share results: Track inclusion goals, monitor outcomes, and adjust approaches as learning emerges.

“It’s been an eye-opener - there are so many organisations out there that need employer support.”

Inclusive practice builds stronger teams, reduces turnover, and attracts wider talent.

Employers leading with flexibility, understanding and community engagement are seeing tangible benefits in retention, morale and performance.

