



Disability Awareness Support Scheme

General Conditions

Introduction

Your work colleagues, your employees or your prospective employees may be people with disabilities. Many people are unsure of how to respond to someone with a disability and are self-conscious about the language they use. They are concerned about using the wrong words and inadvertently causing offence, or of being unable to cope with a situation due to lack of knowledge about the appropriate etiquette when working with people with disabilities.

Disability awareness ensures that an organisation's managers and other employees maximise their working relationships with colleagues who have disabilities.

Aims

The aims of the Disability Awareness Support Scheme (DASS) are:

- to promote the employability of people with disabilities, by creating working environments that enhance their potential as productive members of the labour market;
- to assist the integration of people with disabilities into the workforce;
- to eliminate mistaken perceptions about people with disabilities and their capacity to be productive and effective colleagues and employees;
- to address any concerns that employers and employees may have about working with people with disabilities.

Scope

The Disability Awareness Support Scheme is suitable for the following:

- Organisations interested in employing or retaining people with disabilities;
- Organisations interested in promoting the employment of people with disabilities.

This scheme is open to all organisations in the private sector and is available for raising the awareness of personnel at all levels and in all occupations.

Equality Legislation

The Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection recommends that organisations promote a policy of equality of opportunity in the workplace, in line with the provisions of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 - amended by the Equality Act, 2004, and the Equal Status Act, 2000 – amended by the Equal Status (Amendment) Act, 2012. Employers are encouraged to initiate 'Positive Action Training', which focuses on achieving equality and eliminating discrimination. Organisations who undertake such initiatives will be given priority for grant-aid under this scheme.

Staff Development and Equal Opportunities

Written evidence must be provided to the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection (DEASP) that the Disability Awareness Support Scheme is being availed of as part of the applicant organisation's commitment to equal opportunities. Any Disability Awareness training for which funding is sought under the Scheme should be linked to the applicant organisation's Human Resources or Equal Opportunities Policy and should be approved by the Managing Director.

Grant Limits

Grants of **90%** of eligible costs are available to organisations for the first year of support and grants of **80%** of eligible costs for subsequent years. No more than **€20,000** is payable to an organisation in any one calendar year under this scheme. Grant aid is subject to the availability of yearly budget funding to DEASP for same.

Companies and Providers

There is no pre-approved list of Disability Awareness course providers, but advice on selecting a provider can be sought from the following publications produced by the National Disability Authority (NDA):

Guidelines for Purchasers of Disability Equality Training

<http://nda.ie/Publications/Employment/Employment-Publications/Guidelines-for-Purchasers-of-Disability-Equality-Training.html>

Procurement and Accessibility

<http://nda.ie/Good-practice/Guidelines/Procurement-and-Accessibility/>

The Disability Awareness course provider selected by the applicant organisation must be approved by the DEASP Case Officer and Assistant Principal prior to the commencement of the training programme or course (see *Contacts List of APs with responsibility for Disability Employment Supports* below:

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Workplace-Supports-Contact-List.aspx>).

Eligible Training

Eligible training for the purpose of this grant scheme is training aimed at providing employees with an understanding and awareness of the issues surrounding disability, especially as it impacts on the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce.

It should include the following:

- An overview of the relevant anti-discrimination and equal opportunities legislation;
- General and specific information on disabilities and abilities, focusing on mobility issues and sensory issues (blindness, deafness, etc.);
- Perceptual awareness exercises that aim to dispel common myths;
- Disability etiquette, to clarify appropriate language and behaviour;
- Information on dealing with mental health issues in the workplace.

How to apply

A private sector organisation that wishes to apply for the Disability Awareness Support Scheme can request a Disability Awareness Support Scheme Grant Application form from a DEASP Case Officer or Assistant Principal (see *Contacts List of APs with responsibility for Disability Employment Supports* below:

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Workplace-Supports-Contact-List.aspx>).

Alternatively, the form can be downloaded from the DEASP website at the following link:

<https://www.welfare.ie/en/pdf/DisabilityAwarenessTrainingApplication.pdf>

The application should be submitted between three weeks and two months prior to commencement of the training.

Applications cannot be processed for training which has already commenced.

The applicant organisation cannot be in receipt of funding for the training from any other source.

If the applicant organisation plans to hold more than one training course, a separate form should be completed for each training proposal.

Each application form should be completed in full, giving details of the applicant organisation, proposed training and costings. Each form should be signed, dated and stamped by a representative of the applicant organisation.

Each applicant organisation is required to submit the following to their local DEASP Case Officer or Assistant Principal with their application:

- A copy of the organisation's training plan;
- Details of the trainer/course provider, for example, a copy of the trainer's qualifications, CV, etc.;
- Three tenders if the value of the grant they are applying for is €5,000 or more.

The application must be recommended by the DEASP Case Officer and approved by his/her Assistant Principal prior to the commencement of the training programme or course. If the application is approved, the applicant organisation will get a letter to this effect from the DEASP Case Officer or Assistant Principal.

Please note that the grant amount approved is provisional on all of the conditions in the application being met. If the conditions are not met, the amount of the grant may be adjusted downwards.

Tenders

Where the value of any one application exceeds €5,000 and a single training provider is to provide these services the applicant company will need to obtain three independent quotations and make these available to DEASP. Where the lowest quote is not selected, it will be necessary to state the reason(s) for the selection.

How to claim the grant

A claimant organisation must not be in receipt of a grant or grants from any other source in respect of the training that is being claimed for under this scheme.

DEASP reserves the right to withhold any grant payable pending a satisfactory settlement of any outstanding debt owing to DEASP.

To claim a DASS grant, the claimant organisation must complete in full the DASS Grant Claim Form that the DEASP Case Officer or Assistant Principal sent them when their application was approved. The Declaration on the form must be signed, dated and stamped by a representative of the organisation.

The form must be returned to DEASP no later than two months after completion of the training course for which the grant is being claimed, together with:

- The Certificate of Attendance that forms part of the DASS Grant Claim Form.
 - The Certificate of Attendance must detail:
 - Course title;
 - Course venue;
 - Date(s) of course;
 - Course Provider;
 - Participants' names.
 - The Certificate of Attendance must be signed by all course participants.
 - The Certificate of Attendance must be signed, dated and stamped by the Course Provider (if the Course Provider has a stamp).
- Proof of payment as follows:
 - Original receipted invoice(s) from the Course Provider and supplier(s) of training materials (if training materials were supplied by someone other than the Course Provider);
 - If the Course Provider and supplier(s) of training materials were paid by cheque, written receipts from the Course Provider and supplier(s) of training materials showing the cheque number(s) and the date(s) the payment(s) was(were) made;
 - If the Course Provider and supplier(s) of training materials were paid in a foreign currency, a copy of the bank draft(s);
 - If the Course Provider and supplier(s) of training materials were paid by electronic transaction, a copy of the bank statement(s) showing the transaction(s).
- A Tax Clearance Certificate or a Tax Clearance Access Number (TCAN) for electronic tax clearance for the claimant organisation is required for all claims regardless of amount. Tax clearance can be applied for online at: www.revenue.ie/en/online/tax-clearance.html.
- A Tax Clearance Certificate or a Tax Clearance Access Number (TCAN) for electronic tax clearance for the Course Provider is also required.
- A completed original Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Bank Mandate form.

Eligible Programme Costs

- Fees paid in respect of external programmes;
- Fees paid for in-house disability awareness training by external trainers;
- Open Learning/Computer/Web-Based programme fees;
- Cost of support materials, for example, manuals, books, DVDs, clearly associated with the relevant training, to a maximum of **€650**.

Ineligible Programme Costs

Internal Staff Training

Programmes (in-company or external) delivered by a parent or associate organisation or by a member of the organisation's own staff are **not** eligible for funding under this scheme.

Other Ineligible Costs

The following costs are **not** eligible for funding under the Scheme:

- Cost of training that is mandatory for enterprises to comply with Regulations or Legislation;
- Cost of attendance at conferences, trade exhibitions, seminars and workshops;
- Cost of apprenticeship training;
- Cost of purchasing hardware equipment or software systems for training purposes;
- Cost of capital expenditure associated with training;
- Cost of consultancy type projects associated with the provision or use of equipment, in-firm analysis, or installation and maintenance of systems and procedures (e.g. quality, finance, production).

Access to Claimant Organisation's Records

The claimant organisation shall grant officials of the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection (DEASP), the Comptroller and Auditor General's office and any other person appointed on behalf of either, immediate access to all premises where training has been carried out for which a Disability Awareness Support Scheme claim has been made.

Representatives of either body shall also be granted access to records financial or otherwise maintained by the claimant organisation in connection with the training. The claimant organisation shall comply promptly with all reasonable requests from DEASP for information relating to the Disability Awareness Support Scheme.

Right of Review

The Disability Awareness Support Scheme is a non-statutory scheme that is not covered under social welfare legislation. It is one of a number of social welfare schemes which are run on an administrative basis. Administrative schemes are not appealable under social welfare legislation. However, if a customer is unhappy with a particular decision they can ask to have their case reviewed by another officer, who was not involved in the original decision.

A customer who wishes to have a decision reviewed should write to the DEASP Case Officer within 21 days of the decision, clearly stating the grounds on which he/she wishes the review to be based, and attaching any evidence he/she has that supports his/her case.

Freedom of Information Act, 2014 (F.O.I.)

The DEASP undertakes to use its best endeavours to hold confidential any information provided by your company (correspondence, forms, tenders, etc.), subject to DEASP's obligations under law, including its obligation to release information requested under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

Should you wish that any of the information supplied by your company not be disclosed because of its sensitivity, you should identify the information in question when you provide it and specify the reason(s) for its sensitivity. DEASP will consult with the company's representative about this sensitive information before making a decision on any F.O.I. request received.

Please note however that if no information is identified as sensitive, with supporting reason(s), then it is likely to be released in response to an F.O.I. request.

Further information may be obtained from your local DEASP Case Officer or Assistant Principal administering the programme. It is recommended that the firm retains copies of all documentation for reference.

This Scheme is funded by the Irish Exchequer.