

Ussel

Disability Action Plan

2025 – 2028



Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), Usel is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life (the disability duties’).

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Usel is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

As Chairman of the Board of Directors (Mr William Leathem) and Chief Executive (Mr Scott Jackson) of Usel, (who are a non-departmental public body governed by the Department of Communities) we are committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability action plan. Usel will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to implement effectively this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

Usel will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with, and this disability action plan is effectively implemented, through tracking of our Action Measures, employee feedback and training. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to employees, provide all necessary training and guidance on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan. This will be done through monthly meetings; factory toolbox talks and ongoing training. Usel is committed to consulting with disabled employees to ensure Business objectives align with their needs, using the same communication means as before.

Usel confirms its commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation and progress of the plan as well as carrying out a full five-year review of the plan, and annual progress reviews to report on new actions/initiatives undertaken during the plan’s duration.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this plan, and the point of contact within Usel will be:

Louise Beagan HR Manager
182 – 188 Cambrai Street, Belfast, BT13 3JH
02890 356600
lbeagan@usel.co.uk

Usel Disability Action Plan December 2025 – December 2028

Copies of this plan are available in alternative format (e.g., large print, Braille, audio, easy read or on a computer disc; and/or language) please contact the above-named person to discuss your requirements. A copy of this plan is available on request and will be shared with all employees, placement and programme participants via induction, email, and hard copies issues where appropriate.

Usel confirm its commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five-year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five-year review period. The dates of this plan match those of the Corporate Plan.

Functions

The primary function of Usel is to provide supported employment for people with disabilities or health conditions. The 4 main areas in which Usel offers support are:

- **Employment Support**

Supporting people with disabilities into employment by both direct employment at Usel and supported employment with external employers.

- **Manufacturing**

Industrial sewing and Fulfilment works.

- **Circular Economy**

Recycling confidential waste, mattresses, furniture and cardboard.

- **Ability Café's**

Usel's Ability Café's provide direct employment for people with disabilities and health conditions. The Ability Cafés are also training centres providing work experience for clients on the employability programmes and for participants on the Skills for Life and Work programme.

Previous Measures

Key measures which Usel has previously taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.


- Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training
- Disability Awareness Training
- Mental Health Training
- Actively supporting disabled people into employment, both in our operations and with external employers
- Educating employers on supporting employees with disabilities
- Providing training to employers and employees

Action Measures

Outlined below are the measures which we propose to take over the period December 2025 to December 2028, along with performance indicators and/or targets and measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Measures	Timescale Indicators/target	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Progress
Completion of Equality & Diversity Training to promote a positive attitude towards disabled people	All existing employees to receive training. All new employees will complete training within the first month of employment.	An increased awareness of Equality & Diversity in the workplace and legislation requirements. Respect in the workplace for all.	HR Manager	All staff trained to date and retraining completed. Annual reviews ongoing.
Disability Awareness Training	All existing employees to receive disability awareness training. Training dates set for new and existing employees.	Disability awareness for all employees which includes knowledge and understanding of disability equality legislation	HR Manager	All staff trained to date. Annual reviews ongoing.
Increased number of employees with disabilities encouraged to participate in public life.	Usel are committed to providing training and employability skills	Currently 48% of our workforce have declared that they have a disability. In 2018 Usel were	CEO and Senior Management Team	Usel continue to promote the employment of people with disabilities.

	through employability programmes to ensure people living with disabilities and health conditions can find suitable, sustainable employment.	confirmed to be one of the largest employers of people with disabilities. Usel supports 1100 participants through their employability programmes 100% of who live with a disability or health condition.		
Health & Wellbeing Initiatives.	All staff given the opportunity to participate in one Health & Wellbeing Initiative.	Increased morale with support for employees with disabilities/health conditions Raising awareness and providing support for those individuals with health conditions Reduction of sickness absence and reduction of labour turnover rates.	HR Manager	Usel have been involved in raising awareness for various National Health Days/Weeks/Months e.g. Men's Health awareness, mental health Day and McMillan Coffee Morning. Aviva app providing free health check-ups. Introduction and roll out of Employee Engagement Strategy.

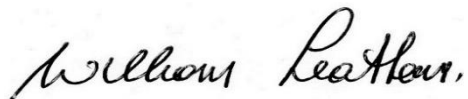
				 Employee Engagement Strategy
Support for employees with hearing and visual impairments to participate in public life	Ongoing	Team meetings, training etc. all have a sign language interpreter present. Signs on notice boards and team talks.	All Managers	BSL interpreters attend team meetings and training etc.
Monitoring of employees and applicants.	Usel use monitoring forms to capture information regarding disability status at the recruitment stage.	Number of applicants and successful candidates applying for posts within Usel. Two-yearly monitoring of current staff regarding changes in relation to monitoring information and seeking reasonable adjustments.	HR Manager	Annual Equality Report completed and returned to the Equality Commission capturing this information. All staff employed over 2 years asked to complete a new monitoring form to capture up to date information.
Direct employment of people with disabilities in Usel's Recycling,	Recruitment of new employees through our Employment Programmes	Annual increase in the number of people with disabilities employed by Usel	Head of Employment Services	50% of direct employment staff at Usel have declared that they have a disability.

Manufacturing and Café Operations.				
Free support helpline for counselling	Ongoing	Reduction in staff sickness absence. Reduction in labour turnover. Signposting for those with mental health issues.	HR Manager	Usage of the helpline for staff ongoing.
Provide support to employees living with disabilities and health conditions through Usel's employability programmes	Ongoing	To provide additional support in the workplace through an experienced Employment Support Officer.	HR Manager/Employability Operations Manager	Review of all staff eligibility by HR and by one-2-one meetings with line managers.
Occupational Health Provisions	Ongoing	Measurable long-term absence and sickness absence through company trigger points.	HR Manager	Occupational health will be used to get a better understanding of an employee's health condition or reason for absence. This in turn will enable Usel to provide adequate help and support to employee's and look at reasonable

				adjustments that may be put into place.
Promotion of Health care via Benenden Private Health Insurance	Ongoing	Reduction in staff sickness absence. Reduction in labour turnover. Quick access to medical care for those with health conditions leading to less time away from the workplace.	HR Manager/ Benenden Business Support Manager	25 members of staff and family members signed up via the corporate scheme. Continue to promote the service to all staff and engagement sessions with Benenden Business Support Manager arranged.
Guaranteed interviews for those individuals with disabilities who meet the minimum essential criteria in recruitment advertising.	Ongoing as part of Usel's recruitment process.	Increased number of applicants for positions within Usel.	HR Manager	50% of direct employment staff at Usel have declared that they have a disability.

Signed by:

Mr William Leatham, Chairperson, Usel



27th November 2024



Mr Scott Jackson, CEO, Ussel



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Jackson', written over a horizontal line.

27th November 2024

