

**Uset  
Disability Action Plan  
2021 – 2024**

## **Introduction**

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 Leatham) and Chief Executive (Mr Bill Atkinson) 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:

Anne Foster  
People & Culture Manager  
182 – 188 Cambrai Street, Belfast, BT13 3JH  
02890 356600  
afoster@usel.co.uk

## **Usel Disability Action Plan December 2021 – December 2024**

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 3 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, mattress, and divan production
- **Circular Economy**  
Recycling confidential waste, mattresses carpets and cardboard.

### **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 2021 to December 2024, 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 annual 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.	People & Culture Manager	All staff trained to date (December 2021). Annual reviews ongoing.
Disability Awareness Training	All existing employees to receive annual disability awareness training. All new employees will complete training within the first month of employment.	Disability awareness for all employees which includes knowledge and understanding of disability equality legislation	People & Culture Manager	All staff trained to date (December 2021). Annual reviews ongoing.

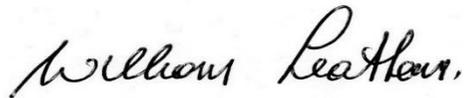
<p>Increased number of employees with disabilities encouraged to participate in public life.</p>	<p>This is a key aspect of the Corporate Plan. As part of the plan, Usel are committed to creating 50 sustainable jobs for people with disabilities through our Direct and Indirect Employment streams</p>	<p>Currently 50% of our workforce have declared that they have a disability. In 2018 Usel were confirmed to be one of the largest employers of people with disabilities</p>	<p>CEO and Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Usel continue to promote the employment of people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Health &amp; Wellbeing Initiatives.</p>	<p>50% of all staff to participate in one Health &amp; Wellbeing Initiative.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture Manager</p>	<p>Usel have been involved in raising awareness for various National Health Days/Weeks/Months e.g. sunrise dip for World mental health Day, sunrise walk. Action Cancer MOT check ups; introduction of Menopause policy etc.</p>
<p>Support for employees with hearing and visual</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Team meetings, training etc. all have a sign language interpreter</p>	<p>All Managers</p>	<p>BSL interpreters attend team meetings and training etc.</p>

impairments to participate in public life		present. Signs on notice boards and team talks.		
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.	People & Culture Manager	Annual Equality Report completed and returned to the Equality Commission capturing this information.
Direct employment of people with disabilities in Usel's Recycling, Manufacturing and Café Operations.	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.
Free support helpline for counselling	Ongoing	Reduction in staff sickness absence.  Reduction in labour turnover. Signposting for those with mental health issues.	People & Culture Manager	Usage of the helpline for staff ongoing.

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.	People & Culture Manager	13 members of staff and family members signed up via the corporate scheme. Continue to promote the service to all staff.
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.	People & Culture Manager	50% of direct employment staff at Usel have declared that they have a disability.

Signed by:

Mr William Leatham, Chairperson, Usel



Mr William Atkinson, CEO, Usel

