



# Guide for employers

Czech Republic

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# INTRODUCTION

Working and preparing for it fills a large part of our lives. Work and the need for self-realization is one of the basic human needs.

Work (in the sense of gainful activity) allows us not only to secure our existence and meaningful content of the day, but also the opportunity to develop and be useful.

An opportunity to work is very important for people with disabilities. They know what it's like to be a recipient of care and support at the personal and state levels. They know looks full of sympathy or disinterest.

But they WANT and CAN WORK too! They want to and can be useful and contribute to society with their abilities (and taxes to the state budget).

Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, recognized and ratified by most countries, addresses work and employment. It emphasizes the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. It is particularly "the right to make a living through work that is freely chosen or accepted in the labour market and in a work environment which is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities" (point 1).

The Convention further refers to this point on the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of disability and the need to:

• promote employment opportunities and career advancement for people with disabilities in the labour market,

 support assistance in finding, obtaining and retaining employment and returning to work;

• provide support and advice with regard to the needs of each individual.

People with disabilities sometimes need help and support in finding work and employment. Employers sometimes need help and support in setting up their job, working conditions or adjusting their work environment (they are not always needed).

Socially responsible employers try to use the potential of the labour market, look for employees who will be suitable for their company, will contribute to its development and will be loyal

to it. They are not afraid to employ workers who may be different.

And when all goes well, and things work out, there are feelings of fulfilment and satisfaction on both sides and benefits for both parties. The ideas of social responsibility and the rights of people with disabilities to work and employment are being fulfilled.

# LEGISLATION

## Employment Act No. 435/2004 Coll., as amended, Part 3 on Employment of people with disabilities

• Definition of who is a person with a disability or disadvantage in the work context

• Rights and obligations of the employer – e.g. employers who have 25 or more employees have the obligation to employ a person with a disability (4%)

• Support of the employer by the state – in case of employing a person with a disability, in the creation of a new job for a person with a disability, in the adjustement of the workplace

• Occupational rehabilitation and retraining

#### Labour Code No. 262/2006 Coll., as amended

• Prohibition of any discrimination against employees

• Specification of working conditions for all employees - working hours, time off, leave, entitlement to further education, entitlement to promotion, etc.

#### Social Services Act No. 108/206 Coll., as amended

• Support services for the development of work and social skills (social rehabilitation, social therapy workshops)

• Support in escorting to the workplace, at the workplace, when dealing with authorities (personal assistance)

• Support in communication to people with hearing impairments (interpreting services)

• and more

### SUPPORT AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

**Key words:** employment authorities, non-profit organizations, supported employment, transit programme

In the Czech Republic, support to employers and job seekers is provided by state institutions in the form of employment authorities and by non-governmental institutions in the form of non-governmental non-profit organizations.

#### Employment authorities of the Czech Republic perform tasks in these areas:

- a) employment,
- b) protection of employees in the event of the employer's insolvency,
- c) state social support,
- d) benefits for the disabled,
- e) care allowance,
- f) assistance in material need,
- g) inspections of the provision of social and legal protection; and
- h) foster care benefits

Employment authorities fall under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and operate throughout the Czech Republic in the form of regional branches. With regard to employment, **non-profit organizations** offer help, support and counselling in the form of supported employment, comprehensive counselling and support. They offer their services to both job seekers and employers.

**Supported employment** is a complex of services that help a person with a disability or disadvantage to find or keep a job in a normal work environment. For employers, this means help in employing and training a person with a disability or disadvantage. Support and advice is individual, ongoing and free!

#### For employers

• assistance in finding a suitable worker and a suitable job position (explain what the skills of a new worker are and where support will be needed),

• how to set the workload and adjust the working environment and conditions (e.g

working hours),

• support in handling administrative matters and communication with the employment authority or other institutions,

• where and how to apply for financial support for a new employee or workplace modification,

• assistance in training a new employee, including on-site support (if needed),

consultations in solving possible difficulties and problems (decrease in the work performance of a worker with a disability, problems in communication with the worker, nervousness in the work team, etc.),

• assistance in finding a new job for a worker with a disability / disadvantage with whom the employer will terminate the employment

#### For job seekers and new employees

helping to clarify one's own abilities and skills,

 helping to clarify what kind of work one would like to do or where one would like to work,

• assistance in compiling a CV and cover letter, in responding to job offers and contacting the employer,

- support in preparing for a job interview, or accompanying them there,
- support and assistance in training at the new workplace,

• help and support in case of difficulties (in performing the work, in communication with colleagues or supervisor, etc.),

• advice on labour law issues (concluding a contract, etc.).

There is a transit programme for young people with disabilities and pupils with special educational needs in secondary schools in the Czech Republic.

The transitional programme is aimed at pupils with special educational needs who want to find a job in the open labour market after leaving school. At the end of schooling, pupils have the opportunity to try out individual internships with regular employers accompanied by an assistant. During these internships, they acquire work and social skills and habits, increase their independence and prepare for employment in the open labour market.

### EXAMPLES OF EMPLOYMENT FOR A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY OR DISADVANTAGE - OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

The examples focus on the opportunities, the support provided to a person with a disability or disadvantage in finding or trying to keep a job, and what has contributed to their employment. a) Selected groups of people

- people with autism or Asperger's syndrome
- people with mental disabilities
- people with a mental illness
- •people with social disadvantages

b) What does / can a person (with a disability) do?

c) What support was provided to a person in finding work / trying to keep the job?

- d) What adjustments of working conditions were needed?
- e) What skills and competencies does the person have?

#### Example 1 – person with Asperger's syndrome

Woman (30)

- studied archiving at university, did not complete her studies
- has completed several unpaid internships in the field
- involved in volunteering (theatre, community cultural organizations)
- has many hobbies: playing drums, animals, nature

- difficulties in social skills - therefore support was provided in this area by a non-profit organization (see what has developed)

- successes:

o keeping the job for 3 years and good relations with the team,

o willingness to try different work activities (job positions),

o acquisition of new skills,

o ability to know suitable activities for herself – interest in technical issues and working with animals – job description adjusted accordingly

o increased self-confidence and, especially when working with animals, strengthened feeling of meaningfulness and usefulness

o in addition to employment, she continues to pursue her hobbies and maintain natural social ties



#### Example 2 – person with Down syndrome (a mental disability)

Man (24 years)

- attended a vocational school

- 4 years of cooperation with a non-profit organization that provided him with internships (transit programme)

- experience: auxiliary work in cafés and restaurants, cleaning work, maintenance at a football stadium

- difficulties: fine motoric skills, decreased intellect, maintaining attention for a long time, tendency to interrupt work if some acquaintance is nearby, fatigue (more frequent short breaks are enough)

- support: initially and with new tasks – checks and help with induction (due to problems with paying attention), regularity, basic knowledge of Down syndrome an advantage

- successes:

o formerly worked once a week for 2 hrs, now works 3hrs twice a week o when he learns something, he manages without being checked and performs

#### conscientiously

o learns fast

o experience from internships and from home - basic housework (washing dishes, slicing food, serving food, cleaning, including vacuuming and wiping)

o good orientation in familiar places, independent public transport travel



#### Example 3 – person with a mental illness

#### Woman (37 years)

#### - no previous work experience

- initial support and assistance of a non-profit organization (finding a job, employment, job retention) was necessary due to lack of work experience, now no help is needed after employment (if necessary, support for the worker and employer is possible again)

- difficulties: concentration, memorization, difficult to tolerate changes (therefore unchanging work suitable, if possible)

#### - successes:

o work capacity 3-4h. daily

o she kept her job and does it without help (now for 2 years)

- o independence (in the performance of work, on the way to / from work)
- o she can ask when she doesn't know or doesn't understand
- o strengthened self-confidence
- o consolidated existing social roles and acquiring new ones



#### Example 4 - a person with a social disadvantage

Man (27 years)

- did not complete secondary school in informatics, completed basic education
- completed 2 14-day courses in of information technology (IT)
- has no hobbies outside IT
- difficulties: low self-confidence (insufficient family background, difficult life experien-

ce: violence, bullying), distrust, communication (does not like more people around him,

communicates only in the form of basic information, mood swings, fear, frequent disagreement with others, minor verbal conflicts)

- success:

o keeping the job after release from prison (for half a year)

o willingness to work on himself and to improve communication

o acquisition of IT skills (E-shop installation, PRESTASHOP programme)

o interested in the operation of the company, proposes measures to improve

the operation of the company

o increased self-confidence

o ability to learn new things and pass on knowledge to other people in the team (substitutability)



### WHAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO EMPLOYERS

- a) Why employ people disadvantaged in the labour market?
- b) Who is a person disadvantaged in the labour market?
- c) How and where to look for a suitable employee?
- d) Who will help me as an employer? And what with?
- e) What kind of support exists for me as an employer?
- f) What do I have to do to be prepared for a new employee?
- g) How much will it cost me as an employer?
- h) Should I be concerned about employing a person with a disability or disadvantage?

#### Why employ people disadvantaged in the labour market?

There are many reasons. It is a question of social responsibility. There is also an obligation to employ persons with disabilities, which is governed by the Employment Act and related regulations and amendments. The employment of people with disabilities also brings financial benefits to the employer in the form of tax rebates, financial assistance from the Employment Authority or a contribution to support the employment of people with disabilities. Last but not least, the employer can get so-called "tailor-made" employees.

#### Who is a person disadvantaged in the labour market?

People disadvantaged in the labour market include recent school leavers and young people (who often do not have enough experience), people with disabilities, people with health or social disadvantages, people over 50, people without qualification or with low qualification, and people with small children. This also includes people returning from prison, people who deal with addiction problems, but also people from stigmatized groups.

#### How and where to look for a suitable employee?

You can use the services of supported employment agencies that offer their services in your region. You can also contact organizations that support people with disabilities or disadvantages, people returning after serving a sentence or dealing with their addictions. It is also possible to use the help of employment authorities or web portals, which focus on job placement for people disadvantaged in the labour market.

#### Who will help me as an employer? And what with?

Supported employment agencies, employment authorities and non-profit organizations will provide you with professional advice (always linked with current legislation). They will help you identify suitable jobs for people with disabilities or disadvantages in your company, assess workplace conditions with regard to the needs of a new employee, select a suitable employee for your company and, if necessary, actively support a new employee when starting a job and during training.

#### How to prepare for the arrival of a new employee?

Any adjustments related to the work environment or job description depend on the individual needs of the new employee. Often, minor adjustments to the workplace, job description or working hours are sufficient. The Supported Employment Agency can help you to adapt the job to a new employee and, if necessary, to prepare your team.

#### How much will it cost me?

The employment of a person with a disability or disadvantage does not always mean an increased financial burden. The state provides certain financial benefits to employers who are open to employing people with disabilities and disadvantages. Employers can receive financial support to adjust the workplace, a tax rebate, and in some cases to support employees' wages. Counselling services and assistance in the recruitment of new employees by supported employment agencies are free of charge.

#### Should I be concerned about employing a disabled or disadvantaged person?

Workers with disabilities or disadvantages are workers like all others. As a rule, they are among the motivated employees whose motivation lies not only in financial rewards, but also in the opportunity to integrate into society and be useful. They tend to be a good addition to the part-time working team. They may need some help and support at first. They do not tend to change jobs. Therefore, if their workload and time are set with regard to their possibilities, you will get reliable and permanent workers. And if you have any questions or difficulties, you can contact the supported employment agencies in your region.

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"This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."