



RCSI

Supporting Staff with Disabilities Code of Practice

Purpose

RCSI is committed to being an employer of choice and to providing an inclusive environment where everyone is treated fairly, valued and respected regardless of difference. We want to go beyond the legislative duties to create a supportive culture for all of our staff.

The purpose of this code of practice is to ensure that, in so far as it possible, RCSI will remove any barrier facing staff with disabilities so that they are supported in the workplace. The policy also ensures RCSI complies with the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 – 2015 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

All staff in RCSI are required to take personal and individual responsibility to ensure that they do not discriminate against staff with disabilities and that they comply with the provisions set out in this document.

Scope

This policy is a guide for all RCSI staff.

Policy

RCSI is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all and to ensuring that any barriers for staff with disabilities are removed so they are supported to perform effectively in the jobs they hold or aspire to.

All reasonable efforts will be made to meet any specific requirements which maximise access to employment, promotion and advancement in RCSI, enabling staff with disabilities to make the fullest contribution to their work.

For the purpose of this document, reasonable accommodation might be an action that helps alleviate a substantial disadvantage. In cases where a cost may be involved such as providing payment to ensure that a person(s) with disabilities receives the support required to assist them in performing to the best of their ability (e.g. in order to take part in a selection process or to undertake employment), the costs provided will be reasonable and will only be provided if such payment does not impose a 'disproportionate burden' on RCSI.

What is a Disability?

The Employment Equality Acts, 1998 – 2015 define disability as:

- The total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions
- Chronic disease or illness
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body;
- A condition that results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition
- A condition that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgments, or which results in disturbed behaviour

The law also covers people who have long-term disabling conditions which may get worse over time, as well as people who used to have a disability but do not have it any more.

A disability that previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future or which is attributed to a person, will also be covered under this code of practice.

While some disabilities are obvious (e.g. as in the case of wheelchair users), others are not readily apparent (e.g. dyslexia, epilepsy or a mental health issue). The same disability can vary in its severity and affect people very differently so that while some people with disabilities may require personal assistance and/or equipment to realise their full potential, most can be fully effective employees without specialist help and so every person with disabilities will be supported as an individual.

The use of stereotypes is not acceptable and can lead to discrimination. Assumptions will not be made about the impact an impairment has on a staff member with disabilities. A conversation should take place with HR before any impact can be identified and support should then be put in place if so required.

Consideration of any question concerning the employment of a person(s) with disabilities will proceed from a position of presumed ability until otherwise demonstrated.

Disclosure of a Disability

RCSI is working to create an environment where staff feel comfortable to disclose their disability with the confidence of a supportive response. Disclosure of personal and medical information is confidential and any information disclosed will not be provided to a third party without prior consent from the individual concerned.

In instances where an individual wishes to disclose details of their disability, they are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department in the first instance.

Code of Practice

This code of practice covers the following areas:

1. Recruitment & Selection
2. Integration into the Workplace
3. Retention in Employment
4. Training
5. Progression
6. Health & Safety at Work

Procedure

1. Recruitment

People with disabilities are encouraged and entitled, by law, to apply for any post in RCSI for which they are qualified and to have their applications considered fairly on the basis of their abilities, qualifications and suitability for the work in question. RCSI will not create barriers to prevent people(s) with disability applying for posts.

RCSI is committed to consulting with job candidates with disabilities and to providing reasonable accommodation and support as necessary to enable candidates to participate in the recruitment and selection process. A person(s) with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to apply for a role before interview.

In support of the above commitment, please see the corresponding [Recruitment & Selection Policy](#).

2. Supporting Staff with Disabilities

RCSI is committed to providing staff with disabilities with the opportunities to develop a full and rewarding career within RCSI. It is the policy of RCSI to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the working environment is such as to minimise the barriers facing staff with disabilities.

Although the majority of people with disabilities do not require any reasonable accommodation to access work, some individuals may require support or equipment to support them in their job role. Where the Human Resources Department is aware that a new staff member has a disability, a member of this team will consult with the staff member to find out about any reasonable accommodation that is required. Where it is appropriate and with the agreement of the person with disabilities, RCSI will seek medical and/or professional advice about the reasonable accommodation that may be implemented.

Disclosure of a disability does not necessarily imply the need for reasonable accommodation. New and existing staff have a responsibility to make a request for reasonable accommodation. Such requests can be made in the strictest of confidence to the Human Resources Department, email: HRqueries@rcsi.ie.

From the start of employment with RCSI, if managers are aware of the disability of new staff members, the induction process will be tailored to meet their requirements with reasonable accommodation being provided to enable their full participation.

The requirements of people with disabilities should also be discussed with HR before placement to ensure that the workplace is safe and accessible and the support required (if any) is already in place.

Managers are expected to find out about the kinds of assistive support, technological or otherwise available. They should also know enough about this technology to be able to discuss their effectiveness with an employee who might benefit from making use of this. Human Resources will be able to provide information if this is required.

3. Retention in Employment

Any staff member can acquire or be diagnosed with a disability at any stage during their working life or may have a disability, which is progressive in nature. In these circumstances, RCSI will support the member of staff and every reasonable effort will be made to retain that person in employment.

Managers should consider and address any barriers for employees who have acquired or been diagnosed with a disability before they return to work. Discussion with the employee should identify any reasonable accommodation that is required and this should be recorded.

4. Training

All staff with disabilities will be afforded the same access to learning and development as their colleagues. In order to ensure that training is fully accessible, it is expected that staff with disabilities should make the facilitator aware of any reasonable accommodation that is required prior to the training session taking place.

5. Progression

Staff with disabilities will be supported with any applications for promotion. All applications will be assessed fairly and candidates will be offered promotion in relation to suitability for the role.

6. Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

RCSI is committed to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all of its employees. Where staff with disabilities have reduced mobility, hearing or sight, it is important that they are able to make a rapid and safe exit in the instance of fire or another emergency.

All staff that require assistance in the event of an evacuation are required to make themselves aware of RCSI's Safety Statement and Emergency Evacuation Procedure (HSP-13).

The Human Resources Department and the Health and Safety Manager will consult with each individual and design an individual PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan). A full copy of the safety statement is located on the RCSI Staff Portal and is available for inspection by all employees.

Safety statements should be seen as a living document and will be checked on a regular basis to ensure that relevant provision is made to cater for people with disabilities in the course of their work and in any emergency situations which should include evacuation procedures.

Grievances

Any member of staff who has a concern that this policy is not being appropriately implemented should raise this, in the first instance, with their Head of Department/Nominee in accordance with RCSI's grievance procedures. In instances whereby a staff member is uncomfortable about approaching their Head of Department/Nominee, they should discuss the matter with the Human Resources Department.

Applicants with a complaint relating to the non-implementation of this policy should write to the Human Resources Department.

Reasonable accommodation will be made to support a member of staff with disabilities with a grievance should this be requested.

This code of practice should be read in conjunction with the following RCSI policies:

- [RCSI Safety Statement](#)
- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)

Getting Further Help

The Human Resources department is available to support any member of staff in understanding or implementing the content of this policy and procedure.

Policy Review

The Human Resources Department will ensure that this policy will be monitored and kept under review.