

Private Sector

Legislation

The private sector is required to comply with the Human Rights Act and not discriminate on the grounds of disability. There is no positive duty toward disadvantaged groups to be 'good employers' including having an equal-employment opportunities programme. It is the Commission's view that mechanisms to address systemic discrimination and disadvantage should be strengthened in both the public and private sectors. Extending the "good employer legislation" to the private sector is one such mechanism.

The CRPD also refers to the private sector specifically in Article 27 (1) (h) which states:

Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programs, incentives and other measures.

Employers' Networks

The EEO Trust promotes equal employment opportunities in the private sector for all target groups and the Employers Disability Network (EDN) provides leadership and specifically encourages and supports disabled people. The network emphasises both the business case for employing disabled people and a rights-based approach. EDN is based on the UK Employers' Forum on Disability and the Australian Network on Disability and is a not-for-profit network of organisations sharing best practice on working with disability in all areas of business. Patron Dr Roderick Deane writes:⁶⁸

- "The EDN is a group of employers dedicated to ensuring that disabled people get the same opportunities in life as the rest of us and, in particular, have access to jobs and work.
- The EDN aims to help employers understand ways in which jobs can be created for disabled people and to encourage welcoming and accepting attitudes to those with disabilities.
- The EDN believes that disability is simply part of the diversity of our society and that disabled people should not be disadvantaged in seeking work but rather be positively encouraged to do so. For this to happen, employers must have a welcoming and inclusive culture.
- The EDN aims to encourage and foster this sort of positive attitude and make it work in practice throughout New Zealand."

The Ministry of Social Development provides secretariat support. To date EDN has set up a website, offering support and advice to employers.

It's about who you know

During conversations conducted around the country as part of the National Conversation about Work it became apparent that employers who had a disabled family member were more likely to employ disabled people. The Commission also observed that people who had acquired their disability after they had been employed were more likely to be accepted as a disabled employee, because they were known in their workplace.

⁶⁸ <http://edn.org.nz/>