



NCBI

**Working for People
with Sight Loss**

Guidelines for recruiting and employing people who are blind or vision impaired



July 2021

Did you know?

Only 24.4% people who are blind or vision impaired in Ireland are in employment. (Census 2016)

People with vision impairment have a 60% less chance of being in employment than the general population.

This document was designed to provide employers with a general awareness and guidance on the specific needs of employees and prospective employees who are blind or vision impaired.

Awareness

- Be aware that levels of vision impairment vary greatly from one individual to another. Avoid a one size fits all approach.
- Be aware of the different forms of mobility aids used e.g. long cane, guide dog, symbol cane etc. Often an employee may not use a mobility aid such as a long cane but may still need specific adjustments in the working environment.
- Do not make assumptions about a prospective employee's ability or inability to effectively work based on their level of vision impairment.



Recruitment

- Ensure application forms are in an accessible format i.e. large print, Braille etc. If the application is online, ensure it is accessible and readable by screenreader software such as JAWS and Zoomtext Fusion. Be aware that PDF's are often not readable by screenreaders.
- At interview stage, be prepared to consult with the candidate on assistance they may require to access the interview. Assistance can include ensuring ease of access to the interview location/building, guiding the candidate to the interview room and having any documentation in an accessible format e.g. digital, Braille etc.

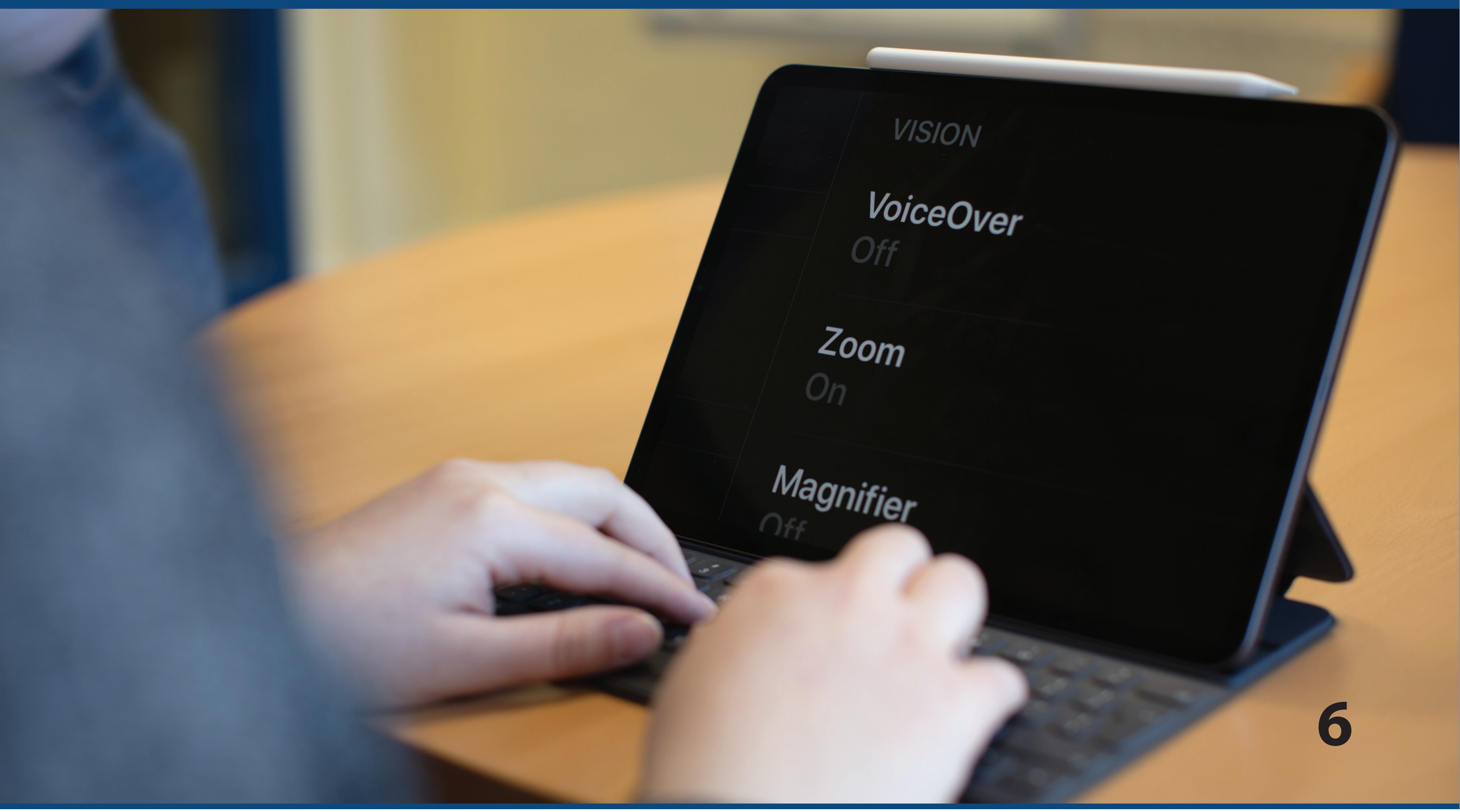
- Ensure the selection panel has the knowledge and skills they need to evaluate job candidates in a fair way that promotes equality of opportunity.
- Contact the NCBI for advice on how to prepare for a candidate who is vision impaired and for training in how to safely guide a person who is blind or vision impaired (known as sighted guide training).

Accommodations

- Do not make assumptions. Needs will vary from person to person, and so ask the employee whether they require any accommodations.
- Be aware of the financial assistance available to employers to help provide necessary accommodations for an employee who is vision impaired. Contact organisations such as the NCBI for this information.
- A simple fire buddy system and extended swipe card entry times can be simplistic accommodations to meet compliance for health and safety.

Areas likely to need consideration can include but are not limited to:

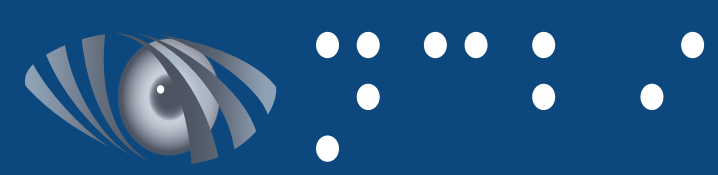
- ✓ Orientation of the workplace
- ✓ Lighting i.e. being beside a window v's artificial lighting
- ✓ Visual cues/Markings on stairs and in dark corridors
- ✓ Audio, large print or Braille signage
- ✓ Assistive Technology such as screen reader and magnification softwares, scanners, Braille display
- ✓ Size of workspace. Larger workspace might be required if employee uses different assistive technology or has a guide dog.
- ✓ Ensure any training including health and safety is fully accessible to employee. Consult with your employee on their needs prior to training commencing.



Post-Covid19

- Be aware that hotdesking may not be appropriate for employees who are blind or vision impaired due to specific needs they may require such as those outlined above i.e. specific lighting requirements, assistive technology etc.





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