

Trinity disAbility Service People and Culture Charter

Creating the conditions for staff to thrive,
belong, and lead inclusive change.



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

**Trinity
disAbility Hub**

Summary

The People and Culture Charter sets out the Trinity disAbility Service's shared commitment to an inclusive, supportive, accountable, and sustainable workplace culture. It provides a framework for how staff are supported through clear roles, professional development, accessible working practices, safeguarding, leadership, communication, and shared responsibility.

In simple terms: this Charter explains how the Service supports its people, strengthens its culture, and enables inclusive professional practice.

Note: This Charter sets out the cultural, strategic, and organisational commitments of the Service. It should be read alongside relevant University policies and the disAbility Service operational governance framework.

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1. Message from the Director

Welcome to the **Trinity disAbility Service People and Culture Charter**.

This Charter sets out the culture, values, expectations, and ways of working that underpin our Service. It is intended to support a workplace in which staff can contribute with clarity, develop with confidence, work collaboratively and sustainably, and experience inclusion, dignity, and belonging in their professional lives.

The Charter reflects the evolving role of the Trinity disAbility Service as a strategic, operational, and values-led service within the University. It recognises that the quality of our internal culture directly shapes the quality, consistency, and impact of the work we do with students, colleagues, and partners across Trinity.

This revised Charter aligns with **Thrive, Trinity's Strategic Plan 2025–2030**, and with the University's commitment to creating the conditions for people to flourish, for collaboration to have impact, and for place to be sustainable and innovative. Within the disAbility Service, this means building a culture in which staff are supported to do excellent work, develop professionally, uphold clear standards, and help advance access, inclusion, and belonging across the University.

We explicitly champion the diversity of our workplace. This is not a symbolic position or a statement of intent alone. It is reflected in how we recruit, support, develop, and retain staff, and in how we design roles, allocate work, and make decisions. We recognise that credibility in this area depends on consistent practice. Our expectation is that inclusion is experienced in day-to-day working life, not simply articulated in policy.

Source: Trinity College Dublin, Thrive: Strategic Plan 2025–2030

The Charter also sits alongside the Service's operational governance framework on roles, boundaries, safeguarding, confidentiality, and Fitness to Study / Practise. It is not a procedural manual. Rather, it sets the cultural and organisational foundation for how we work, how we support one another, and how we uphold professional accountability in a complex and changing environment.

We are committed to building a service that is inclusive, reflective, ambitious, evidence-informed, and accountable. This requires clear leadership, effective communication, psychologically safe teams, appropriate support, and shared responsibility for the standards we set and maintain.



Declan Treanor
Director
Trinity disAbility Service

2. Purpose of this Charter

The purpose of this Charter is to provide a shared framework for the culture, expectations, and commitments that shape work within the Trinity disAbility Service.

- support delivery of the Service’s strategic priorities;
- align our internal culture with Trinity’s Strategic Plan 2025–2030, Thrive;
- create the conditions for staff to thrive professionally and personally;
- clarify what staff can expect from the Service and what the Service expects of staff;
- strengthen inclusive leadership, accountability, and collaboration;
- support high-quality, ethical, and sustainable professional practice;
- reinforce a culture of belonging, dignity, respect, and shared responsibility.

This Charter builds, rather than replaces, the previous work–life balance framing by embedding it within a broader People and Culture approach. It recognises that staff wellbeing and sustainable work practices remain central, but that these are shaped by a wider set of organisational conditions.

Accordingly, the Charter extends the focus to include leadership, communication, professional development, inclusion, governance, safeguarding, role clarity, and professional accountability. These areas are not separate from work–life balance; they are the mechanisms through which it is realised in practice.

This reflects a more integrated and mature approach, where wellbeing is understood not as an isolated concept, but as an outcome of how the Service is structured, led, and experienced on a day-to-day basis.

3. Strategic Alignment

This Charter is aligned to **Thrive, Trinity’s Strategic Plan 2025–2030**.

Thrive is organised around three pillars: **Purpose, People, and Place**. Within the Trinity disAbility Service, this strategic alignment means that our internal people and culture commitments must support excellent and inclusive service delivery, high-quality partnership with Schools and professional services, innovation in disability inclusion, sustainable practice, and a workplace culture in which staff are supported to contribute meaningfully and develop over time.

Pillar	Implication for the Service
Purpose	Role clarity, strategic contribution, evidence-informed improvement, and institutional impact.
People	Inclusive leadership, wellbeing, development, dignity, and psychological safety.
Place	Accessible environments, flexible and sustainable working, and enabling physical and digital systems.

In this context, strategic alignment means ensuring that the Service's internal culture reflects the wider University commitment to purposeful work, inclusive people practices, and accessible, sustainable places.



Strategic alignment connects the work of the Trinity disAbility Service to Trinity's wider mission, people, and campus environment.

4. Our Vision, Mission, and Values

The Trinity disAbility Service is committed to creating an accessible, inclusive, and transformational environment within an interdependent University community. This extends beyond the educational experience of students and reflects the full range of roles across the Service—strategic, operational, administrative, clinical, technical, and developmental—that collectively enable access, inclusion, and belonging.

Our people and culture commitments are grounded in the biopsychosocial model of disability and in the principle that access, inclusion, and belonging must shape how we work internally as well as how we support others.



People and culture are shaped through communication, collaboration, and shared understanding.

Our values are inclusive practice, respect, collaboration, curiosity, accountability, sustainability, and the courage to address barriers and drive change.

Sources: Trinity disAbility Service, People and Culture, Trinity College Dublin. Trinity disAbility Service, About Us, Trinity College Dublin.

5. What This Charter Covers

This Charter sets out our commitments under six interconnected headings: **Purpose, People, Place, Professional Practice, Safeguarding and Risk,** and Leadership and Culture. These reflect both the strategic direction of Trinity and the practical realities of work within the disAbility Service.

These six headings show how the Charter moves from values into practice. They explain how the Service supports purposeful work, inclusive people practices, accessible and sustainable environments, professional accountability, appropriate safeguarding, and strong leadership and communication. Together, they recognise that workplace culture is shaped through daily practice, communication, decision-making, support, accountability, and the conditions that allow staff to contribute safely and meaningfully.

- **Purpose** focuses on role clarity, meaningful contribution, and evidence-informed improvement.
- **People** focuses on inclusion, dignity, belonging, wellbeing, and staff development.
- **Place** focuses on accessible environments, flexible working, and sustainability.
- **Professional Practice** focuses on role boundaries, quality, consistency, and accountability.
- **Safeguarding and Risk** focuses on shared responsibility, lawful information-sharing, and formal escalation.
- **Leadership and Culture** focuses on communication, psychological safety, teamwork, and shared standards.

6. Purpose

6.1 Clarity of role and contribution

Every role within the Trinity disAbility Service contributes to the Service's wider mission of advancing access, inclusion, and belonging across Trinity. Staff should have a clear understanding of their role, the boundaries of their work, the priorities they are contributing to, and how their work connects with colleagues, students, Schools, professional services, and the wider University community. Role clarity supports confidence, consistency, collaboration, and safe professional practice. It helps staff understand not only what they do, but why their work matters.

6.2 Meaningful contribution

We are committed to creating the conditions in which staff can do purposeful and meaningful work. This means supporting staff to see the value of their contribution, take part in work that reflects their skills and interests, and understand how their efforts support students, colleagues, service development, and institutional change.

This includes:

- linking individual workplans to Service priorities;
- supporting staff to understand the wider context and impact of their work;
- recognising both specialist expertise and shared responsibilities;
- encouraging project work that connects with staff interests, strengths, and professional development;
- making space for innovation, reflection, learning, and improvement.

6.3 Evidence-informed improvement

We value reflective, evidence-informed practice. This means using data, feedback, professional insight, lived experience, and staff learning to improve how we work and how we support others.

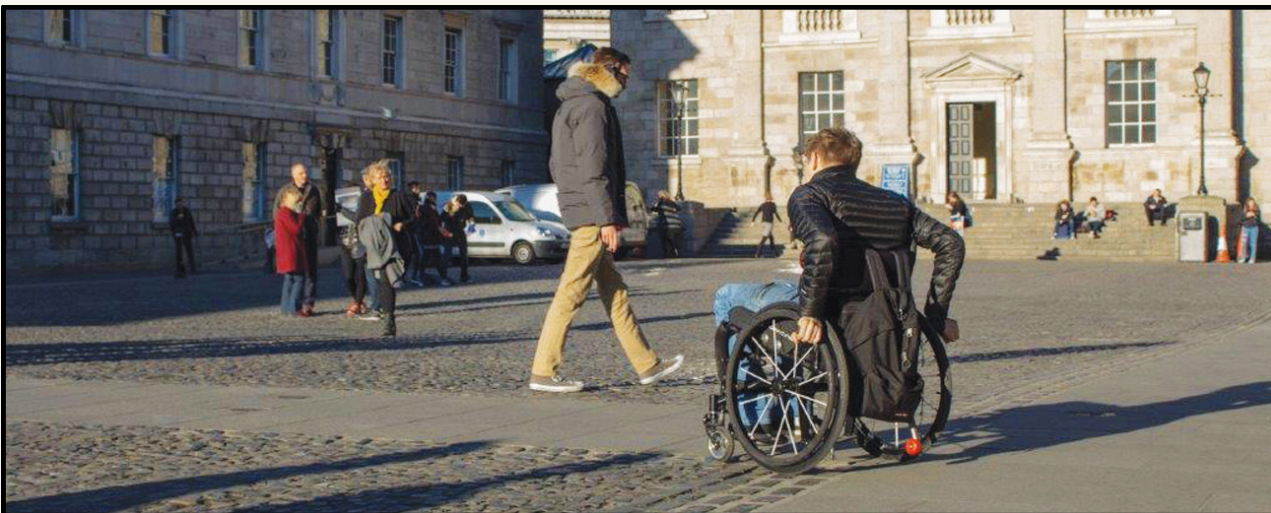
Improvement is understood as a shared and ongoing process. It involves noticing what is working well, identifying where barriers remain, learning from experience, and using that learning to strengthen disability inclusion, belonging, and professional practice across the University.

When people understand the purpose of their work, they can contribute with confidence, creativity, and shared responsibility.

7. People

7.1 Inclusion, dignity, and belonging

We are committed to a workplace in which all staff are treated with dignity and respect and are able to experience inclusion and belonging. Belonging within the Service should extend across disability, neurodivergence, race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, age, family status, caring responsibilities, nationality, contract type, grade, and professional background.



Jack Kavanagh using the accessible pathway in Front Square, Trinity College Dublin, reflecting dignity, belonging, development, and inclusive participation across campus.

Belonging is built through dignity, realistic expectations, supportive relationships, and a workplace culture where staff can ask for help without stigma.

7.2 Wellbeing and sustainable working lives

We recognise that staff wellbeing is essential to individual flourishing, team effectiveness, and service quality.

- sustainable workloads;
- realistic expectations and prioritisation;
- supportive supervision and line management;
- psychological safety and positive feedback loops
- access to peer support and reflective discussion;
- timely workplace adjustments and accessible working conditions;
- a culture in which staff can raise concerns without stigma;
- practical support for mental health and wellbeing.

7.3 Development and progression

We are committed to supporting staff development, learning, and progression.

- access to professional development;
- opportunities to deepen specialist expertise;
- support for leadership and management capability;
- development planning through supervision and annual review;
- learning from internal projects, partnerships, and institutional change work;
- encouragement to engage in reflective and continuing professional development.

8. Place

8.1 Accessible and enabling environments

We are committed to creating physical, digital, and organisational environments that enable staff to do their work effectively and accessibly.

- accessible physical space;
- inclusive meeting practices;
- digital accessibility in systems, documents, and communications;
- appropriate technology and equipment;
- attention to sensory, mobility, communication, and cognitive access needs;
- practical adjustments that enable staff to participate fully in work.

8.2 Flexible and hybrid working

Where compatible with service needs, role requirements, and University policy, we support flexible and hybrid working arrangements that enable staff to manage responsibilities effectively and work sustainably. Flexible working should be approached in a fair, transparent, and role-sensitive way.

8.3 Sustainability

Sustainability is a core organisational commitment, not an optional add-on.

Within the Service, this means using resources carefully, embedding sustainability in decision-making, supporting digital-first approaches where appropriate, reducing avoidable waste, and designing services that are resilient over time.

9. Professional Practice

9.1 Role clarity and professional boundaries

The Trinity disAbility Service has a defined institutional role. Staff are expected to understand the limits of that role, treat boundaries as a matter of good professional practice, escalate complex risk rather than absorb it informally, and avoid operating outside their role or competence.

9.2 Quality and consistency

We aim for work that is consistent, timely, proportionate, and professionally robust. This requires clear processes, good communication, lawful and ethical decision-making, proportionate use of discretion, accurate documentation, and constructive challenge where practice is inconsistent or unclear.

9.3 Accountability

Professional accountability is a core element of our culture. This means following agreed procedures, documenting decisions appropriately, escalating concerns where required, using supervision well, and understanding that accountability supports staff as well as institutional quality.

10. Safeguarding and Risk

10.1 Safeguarding as a shared responsibility

Safeguarding is a core component of professional culture and institutional responsibility. Staff are expected to recognise safeguarding concerns, act promptly and proportionately, and escalate concerns through formal routes, avoiding informal case holding where risk exceeds low-level adjustment matters. The Service will support staff in meeting these expectations through structured training, clear guidance, and active line management support. This includes building confidence in identifying risk, understanding thresholds for escalation, and applying appropriate procedures consistently.

10.2 Confidentiality and lawful information-sharing

We respect confidentiality and treat information with care. However, confidentiality is not absolute. Our commitment is to work within lawful, proportionate, transparent, and professionally justified information-sharing practices.

10.3 Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise

Where matters move beyond reasonable accommodation into safety, capacity, safeguarding, or professional suitability, the University's formal governance routes apply. This includes the application of established processes such as distress procedures, safeguarding pathways, and Fitness to Study / Practise frameworks where appropriate.

Staff should not carry high-risk cases alone. Formal escalation is a protective and professional act, supported through clear procedures, line management, and institutional governance structures.

11. Staff Protection and Professional Support

We are committed to a workplace culture in which staff are supported to work safely, ethically, and sustainably. This includes recognising that some aspects of disability support work can be complex, uncertain, emotionally demanding, or involve risk.

Staff should not feel that they have to manage difficult situations alone. Consultation, supervision, line management support, and peer discussion should be normal parts of professional practice. Uncertainty should be something that can be discussed safely and constructively, rather than hidden or carried individually.

This includes:

- normalising consultation and reflective discussion;
- recognising emotionally demanding work;
- ensuring line management and peer support are accessible;
- supporting staff to raise concerns early;
- using shared ownership where risk or complexity requires it;
- ensuring staff are supported when boundaries, safeguarding, or escalation are needed.

Asking for support is understood as good professional practice. It protects staff, strengthens decision-making, and supports consistent, ethical, and accountable service delivery.

Staff should not carry complexity alone. Support, consultation, and shared responsibility protect both people and practice.

12. Leadership and Culture

12.1 Leadership commitments

Leaders and managers within the Service are expected to communicate clearly and in a timely way, provide role clarity and direction, support staff development and wellbeing, foster inclusion and respect, hold appropriate boundaries and standards, and create psychologically safe conditions for discussion and challenge.

12.2 Team culture

All staff contribute to culture. We therefore expect colleagues to engage respectfully with one another, contribute to open and constructive communication, work collaboratively across roles and disciplines, raise issues early where possible, respect boundaries and different forms of expertise, and take shared responsibility for the culture we are building.

12.3 Communication

Good communication is a professional and cultural expectation. Internally and externally, we commit to communication that is respectful, clear, timely, role-aware, solution-focused where possible, and consistent with our responsibilities as a professional service.

13. Performance, Review, and Development

We are committed to a supportive approach to performance, review, and development. This means ensuring that staff have clear objectives, regular opportunities for reflection, constructive feedback, and meaningful conversations about their development needs, interests, and ambitions.

Performance review should support clarity, fairness, accountability, and professional growth. It should help staff understand how their work connects to Service priorities, how their contribution is recognised, and what support or development may be needed to help them work effectively and sustainably.

This includes:

- regular supervision and support;
- clear objectives linked to Service priorities;
- annual review and reflection;
- constructive feedback and recognition;
- discussion of development needs, strengths, and ambitions;
- evidence-informed work planning;
- alignment between individual contribution and Service direction.



Performance management should be understood as a shared and developmental process. It should not be limited to assessment or correction, but should help create the conditions for staff to learn, contribute, and develop with confidence.

Development is strongest when staff have clarity, feedback, support, and space to grow.

14. Workplace Adjustments and Accessibility for Staff

We are committed to ensuring that disabled staff and staff with health, caring, communication, sensory, neurodivergent, or other relevant needs can access timely and appropriate workplace adjustments. Our commitment includes accessible processes for seeking adjustments, respectful and confidential engagement, timely implementation where approved, practical review where needs change, accessible digital and physical environments, and a culture in which requesting support is normalised.

This includes recognising that accessibility may involve physical, digital, sensory, cognitive, communication, and wellbeing-related supports.



Arts Building Respite Room. Accessible working environments include spaces for rest, regulation, and wellbeing.

15. Co-creation, Inclusion, and Belonging

We believe that access, inclusion, and belonging are achieved not only through student-facing support, but also through how staff work together, how power is exercised, how decisions are made, and how lived experience informs institutional change. We are committed to listening to lived experience, supporting participation in shaping change, valuing different professional and personal perspectives, reducing structural and cultural barriers, and creating conditions in which both staff and students can belong.



The Inclusive Internship Programme reflects co-creation, participation, and belonging in practice.

16. Review and Accountability

This Charter should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains aligned with Trinity's Strategic Plan 2025–2030, relevant University policy and governance frameworks, developments in staff wellbeing, inclusion, and accessibility practice, the operational realities of the Service, and feedback from staff and leadership.

Review should consider whether the Charter remains strategically aligned and whether staff experience reflects its commitments in practice.

Accountability means more than having a Charter in place. It requires ongoing reflection on how the commitments are experienced in day-to-day working life, how concerns or gaps are identified, and how learning is used to strengthen culture, practice, communication, and support.

This review process should include consideration of staff feedback, changing service needs, emerging accessibility and inclusion practice, and the extent to which the Charter continues to support a workplace culture based on dignity, clarity, belonging, professional accountability, and shared responsibility.



Accountability means checking that the values of the Charter are not only written down, but experienced in everyday working life.

Review and accountability are strengthened through reflection, listening, and shared responsibility.

17. Closing Statement

The Trinity disAbility Service People and Culture Charter sets out the Service's commitment to a workplace culture that is inclusive, accountable, sustainable, reflective, and enabling. It recognises that excellent services are built not only through structures and procedures, but through people, relationships, trust, boundaries, and shared standards. It affirms that staff are supported to flourish, to work safely and ethically, and to contribute to the Service's strategic mission with clarity and confidence.

In summary, the Charter commits the Service, through its leadership, management, and staff, to clear purpose, inclusive people practices, accessible and sustainable place, professional accountability, appropriate safeguarding, and strong leadership and communication.



Sources and useful links

<p>Trinity College Dublin, Thrive: Trinity Strategic Plan 2025-2030</p>	<p>https://strategy.tcd.ie/</p>
<p>Trinity disAbility Service, People and Culture, Trinity College Dublin</p>	<p>www.tcd.ie/disability/about-us/people-culture/</p>
<p>Trinity disAbility Service, About Us, Trinity College Dublin</p>	<p>https://www.tcd.ie/disability/about-us/</p>
<p>Trinity disAbility Service Internship Programme</p>	<p>https://www.tcd.ie/disability/internships/</p>

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