

Disabled employees in SA more likely to flee their workplace, survey finds

Not enough is being done to secure the rights of disabled and LGBTQ+ people in the workplace

28 July 2024 - 00:00

BY GLORIA MOTSOERE



A disabled man in a wheelchair waits at the bottom of a set of steps. WorkL has found that many employers fail to provide the necessary facilities for their disabled employees, making it difficult for them to perform their duties.

Image: Supplied

Employees with disabilities in South Africa are more likely to leave their current workplaces, according to employee experience platform WorkL.

The London-based company, which has partnered with the Sunday Times to find the country's best places to work, surveyed 12,500 employees at 3,000 South African organisations. The survey found the flight-risk score for disabled employees increased by 12% between February and March, and is now at 25%.

In contrast, 18% of employees without disabilities were identified as a flight risk. In this context, a flight risk is described as an employee who might leave his or her workplace, either for a better opportunity somewhere else, because of difficulties in their current job or for other personal reasons.

Based on feedback from surveyed workers with

disabilities, these employees were prone to being flight risks because some employers failed to provide the necessary workplace facilities for them, making it challenging for these workers to perform their duties effectively, WorkL said.

Disabled employees could also face bias and discrimination in the workplace from colleagues and management, leading to them being overlooked for promotions.

“ This data highlights how minority employees need more support to ensure their flight risk is low, and employers retain talent

- WorkL

It added that people with disabilities often had fewer opportunities for career development, as they might be seen as less capable, leading to fewer assignments or leadership roles.

In South Africa, people with disabilities make up 1.2% of the workforce, and most workplaces are failing to meet the 2% target set by the government for the employment of people in this category.

The survey also found that 23% of employees who identified LGBTQ+ were more likely to leave organisations, compared with 18% of heterosexual workers.

“This data highlights how minority employees need more support to ensure their flight risk is low, and employers retain talent,” it said.

Meanwhile, the report also showed that most

people who were a flight risk were employees who were not in management positions, with the score sitting at 27%, while only 9% of managers were likely to leave their jobs.

WorkL has the world’s largest live employee-sentiment database, with data tracking how employees feel across 60,000 organisations globally. It has used its data to find the best organisations to work for in the UK, Australia and the United Arab Emirates since 2017.

In 2024 WorkL has partnered with the Sunday Times to host the Best Place to Work awards, to help companies across the country attract and retain talent. Entries are open until October 18, with the winners set to be announced before the end of the year. The awards will recognise organisations with the highest levels of employee engagement, wellbeing and satisfaction.

“Businesses entering will not understand their own flight-risk score, but will understand their organisation’s overall engagement score, their confidence in management indicator, and their diversity and inclusion indicator,” WorkL said.
