



Disability in Leadership Toolkit

STRIVING TO IMPROVE THE
REPRESENTATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN
SENIOR LEADERSHIP

About Inclusive Boards



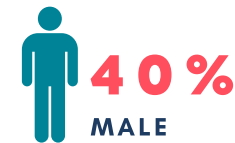
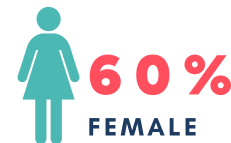
Inclusive Boards (IB) is a boutique executive search firm based in London and the Midlands. We were set up to support organisations and sectors in their efforts to develop more diverse boards, senior leadership teams and stronger governance structures. Our services include Executive Search, Advisory, and Conferences. We also deliver Executive Training and have a flagship tech campaign - The Inclusive Tech Alliance.

OUR REACH



60,000

senior leaders including executives from the top 4,000 tech firms by income in the UK.



SOME OF OUR CLIENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTENTS

Foreword: Dr Lisa Cameron MP	04
Foreword: Debbie Abrahams MP	05
Defining Disability	06
Defining Equality and Diversity	07
Intersectionality	07
The Business Case	08
UK Disability Landscape	08
Government Policy	09
Survey Results	10
Recruitment	11
Spotlight: Caroline Casey	14
Working Environments	15
Progressing Talent	17
Spotlight: George Fielding	19
Engagement and Communication	20
Techological Solutions	22
Spotlight: Neil Barnfather	24
Beyond the Toolkit	25
In Focus DPULOS	26
Spotlight: Seema Flower	27
Final Thoughts	28
End Note: Psychologists on Boards	29
Methodology	30
Bibliography	31

FOREWORD

As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Disability, I am delighted to support the launch of Inclusive Boards Disability and Senior Leadership toolkit.

The APPG for Disability has worked with senior figures across both public and private sectors to provide parliamentarians with the valuable opportunity to engage with individuals and organisations outside parliament who share an interest in disability issues. Over the past few years, we have called on the experience and expertise of the disabled community to help shape policy in regards to employment and career development. We have also coordinated with the academic community, working closely with the authors of Ahead of the Arc linking them to not only policymakers but also creating a community centred on getting people with disabilities into work, sharing the common belief that when disabled people participate, everyone benefits.

Hence why the work of Inclusive Boards and the subsequent toolkit is fundamental. The toolkit itself makes recommendations to organisations and sectors for improving the representation of disabled people on their senior teams in an efficiently modern manner, enabling organisations, who may not have the network or knowledge to employ and support people with disabilities.



Dr Lisa Cameron MP
Chair of the APPG for Disability

FOREWORD

I am delighted to provide the foreword to this Disability in Leadership Toolkit, which is a wonderful aid to help us achieve our commitments as signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly articles 27 and 29.

I believe in a social model of disability, a society which removes the barriers restricting opportunities and choices for disabled people. Key to this is tackling the gross under representation of disabled people in senior leadership roles, including at Board level. Diverse and inclusive workforces are good both for society and for businesses. Mixed teams are more representative of customers; offer a variety of viewpoints and a wider range of experience, which improves decision-making, and ultimately the services and products that their organisation provides. Disabled people in visible leadership roles also project a disability friendly organisational culture and provide role models to other workers.

This toolkit makes practical recommendations to different organisations and sectors for improving their disability diversity at Board and senior leadership level. Crucially, these recommendations are based on knowledge, lived experience, and the testimony of disabled people. There are several simple steps that organisations can take when looking to improve the number of disabled people working in senior leadership roles; including ensuring recruitment packs are accessible and that positions are advertised on disability specific websites.

The toolkit also identifies the under-reporting of disability and the progression of disabled in work as issues that need tackling. Disabled senior leaders have stated that they would not have reached their current position without the support of or mentoring from a senior colleague. However, previous research has suggested that disabled people find it more difficult to obtain mentoring or similar support compared with non-disabled people. Introducing a mentoring scheme specifically for disabled people and setting up peer to peer networks can help increase the number of disabled people at senior levels, and I would urge organisations to find out more about how they can do this.

Debbie Abrahams MP

There are also wider considerations for policy makers, including improving educational opportunities for disabled people. Currently, the proportion of disabled people with no qualifications is nearly three times that of non-disabled people; we must strive to do more to address this inequality. Increasing the awareness and scope of Access to Work and dispelling the myths that surround the cost of making 'reasonable adjustments' are key not just to improving disabled people's access to the labour market, but to ensuring we retain experienced workers who may become sick or disabled. Nine out of ten disabilities are acquired. As employers we must work to support our employees' health and wellbeing, while offering reasonable adjustments to support an employee to stay in work and progress their career, if they become sick or disabled.

Political parties need to get their houses in order too, as employers and as organisations with thousands of local and national political representatives. They must do more to ensure that their workforce and representatives are more reflective of the populations that they serve. This is an issue that should matter to us all. I congratulate everyone involved in developing this toolkit and I hope that all organisations will use it to improve their disability diversity at a senior level



DEFINING DISABILITY

The Equality Act (2010) defines a disabled person as someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities. The disability movement instead prefers a definition highlighting that it is society's reaction to an individual's impairment that is disabling, not the impairment itself.

Definitions of disability can largely be apportioned into two groupings; the 'medical' model and the 'social' model. The former suggests that people are disabled by their impairments and these should be 'fixed' by medical treatments. The focus of the medical model therefore is what is 'wrong' with the person and locates the causes of this problem as "stemming from the functional limitations or psychological losses which are assumed to arise from disability". The latter, the 'social' model of disability, instead locates the problem within society arguing that it is not an individual's impairment(s) that are disabling but "society's failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organisation". There remains a general agreement that the best way to support the independence and inclusion of disabled people lies in tackling the barriers that society puts in their way. The social model has largely been the accepted basis for government policy and will therefore form the basis for the recommendations in this report.

We appreciate that the impact of impairments varies considerably from person to person. The recommendations included in this toolkit aim to promote practices to employers, organisations and sectors to improve the experiences of all disabled people as they climb the career ladder into senior leadership positions.



There are over 1 billion disabled people worldwide – accounting for around 15% of the global population.

DEFINING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Diversity can be defined as having many people that are different from each other. However, we know that diversity extends beyond the prescription in the Equality Act 2010. Additional dynamics to take into account can include less tangible factors such as life experience and personal attitudes. The aim of a truly diverse organisation is to cultivate a broad spectrum of attributes and characteristics. Diversity and inclusion are often looked at from two different perspectives; a moral case and a business case.

The former looks at the ethical and responsible ways diversity at work can be managed while the latter looks at how diversity contributes to organisational performance. The moral case has frequently been expressed in terms of Equal Opportunities, which has led to the development of various items of legislation. The business case is often referred to in terms of achieving and managing diversity and inclusion. Equally important issues that should be noted include; appreciation of how difference can enhance an organisation's work, strengthen governance, and reinforces responsible recruitment practices. Inclusivity is about embedding a culture of acceptance rather than tokenism.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Historically 'equality and diversity' has always excluded intersectionality and discounts the experiences faced by 'other' classification groups.

In 2015 a study found that "White women's leadership definitions reflected contemporary leadership models. In contrast, minority ethnic women defined leadership using predominantly ethno-cultural lenses, which informed their self-identities and orientation towards others. Regarding enacting leader identities, white women described historical gender and class barriers to enacting leadership, while minority ethnic women described current barriers linked to ethnic and religious identities ". When intersectionality challenges are taken into account, it allows us to consider what it means to have a marginalised status within a marginalised group. There is a need to take the intersectional invisibility faced by different groups into account and manage it as if it were a 'protected characteristic'. We know that women will often not put themselves forward for leadership positions, however, are the experiences the same of BME women or disabled BME women?



Life costs you £570 more on average a month if you're disabled.

THE BUSINESS CASE

The business case for diversity is well reported. Business leaders agree that mixed teams are more representative of customers; offer a variety of viewpoints and a wider range of experience, which improves decision-making and problem-solving. This is particularly relevant for charities and organisations that serve disabled people, representing service users at senior level is unquestionably crucial to providing effective support.

With a total spending power of families with at least one disabled person estimated at £249 billion a year in the UK, ensuring services are accessible to disabled people unquestionably makes business sense, and employing disabled people in senior leadership or on Boards to apply their lived experience, is vital to ensuring this is done successfully. Research published by Mckinsey and Company in 2007 also found that better gender diversity at senior levels, correlated with higher equity returns.

UK DISABILITY LANDSCAPE

Disability is frequently under reported in existing research on diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This is particularly true of senior leadership teams and Board appointments. While there remains significant difficulties in collecting disability data for senior leadership teams, resulting from the fact that employees are required to self-disclose, tackling the lack of disability diversity amongst senior leaders with similar enthusiasm to those other strands of the diversity agenda should be treated as a priority.

In July - September 2018 the Office of National Statistics reported that the employment rate for disabled people stands at 51.3% compared with 81.4% for non-disabled people. It is no surprise that there is a real lack of visibility and representation of disabled people at Board and senior leadership level.

In a survey of C-suite members, EY and the Valuable 500 found that only 7% of executives reported having an impairment while 56% said the topic of disability rarely or never comes up on their leadership agenda. Given that 18.6% of the working age population is disabled, there is a sizable disparity between the proportion of disabled people able to work and those reaching senior leadership.

In 2018/19 Inclusive Boards surveyed the Boards of every funded sports organisation in the UK and found that only 5% of board members consider themselves to be disabled, compared to around 22% in the wider UK population.

In addition in 2018 Inclusive Boards surveyed 61 of the 119 social investment organisations and found that just 7% of the sectors workforce considered themselves to be disabled. These findings are broadly similar to that of the 2017 Big Society Capital Survey with the proportion of disabled workers less than half that of the working age population of disabled people. During our interviews disability was mentioned frequently by interviewees with many stating a lack of 'disabled employees' in their organisations and the access to the office being limited. This highlights the misconception of disability being limited to physical factors only.

In the public sector, 6.2% of Civil Servants consider themselves to be disabled whilst the Lord Holmes Review found that just 3% of existing public appointees reported that they were disabled. The BBC's reflecting disability in the UK within the BBC workforce report suggests introducing a disability leadership and workforce target of 12% by 2022.

The disability sector has traditionally been regarded as a sector where disabled people can expect to encounter the most inclusive recruitment and retention practices. However, disabled people looking to work at, or progress to a senior leadership position, should not see disability organisations as their best (or only) opportunity for progression. All organisations and sectors should be practicing inclusive recruitment and retention.



The total spending power of families with at least one disabled person is estimated at £249 billion a year.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

The two ticks accreditation, originally established by Job centre Plus awarded certification if employers agreed to make five commitments aimed at improving the employment; retention; training and career development of disabled employees. This was replaced by 'Disability Confident' in 2016. The Disability Confident scheme has three levels: committed employer; confident employer and confident leader, each requiring progressive commitment and activities aimed at improving employment and recruitment practices for disabled people. Currently 11,262 employers are signed up. The scheme has attracted some criticism for the fact that it is possible for an employer to become a confident leader without employing a single disabled person, in fact 18% of confident leaders don't employ any disabled people.

Limited workforce data is available regarding disabled people. Influenced by mandatory gender pay gap reporting the government recently produced a voluntary reporting framework on disability; mental health and wellbeing with the aim of supporting employers to be more transparent and ultimately drive the culture change required to build a more inclusive society.

Under the Equality Act (2010) employers in the UK are required to provide 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure disabled people are not significantly disadvantaged while at work. As part of the Access to Work (ATW) scheme the government offers support and grants to cover practical support in the workplace which is not covered by reasonable adjustments.



1 in 3 people see disabled people as being less productive than non-disabled people.

SURVEY RESULTS

We surveyed over 1000 business leaders



11%

Or or 1 in 10 wouldn't be apprehensive about recruiting a disabled person to a senior role.

41%

felt that disabled people might take a lot of sick leave

45%



felt their office might not be very accessible:

GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND OPENLY RESPONDENTS ALSO SAID '[DISABLED PEOPLE'S] CAPABILITIES MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH TO CARRY THE JOB PROPERLY' AND [THEY DIDN'T THINK DISABLED PEOPLE COULD COPE WITH] THE HIGH STRESS INVOLVED WITH EXECUTIVE LIFE'



ONE THIRD DID NOT THINK THEIR ORGANISATION WOULD BENEFIT FROM EMPLOYING A DISABLED PERSON.



1 Recruitment Processes

“ I think from my experience i’m not sure whether agencies who are recruiting people really consider whether they feel that some disabled people when they are applying for jobs have transferable skills, have the ability to grow into the role but may not be completely ready then... at the starting point. It's a difficult one to gauge I think there's an underlying sense that some employers sometimes would probably bolt at the thought of employing a disabled person...”

Interview Respondent

It is critical that organisations reflect the world in which they exist in. One in seven of the world’s population live with an impairment or condition, only one in 14 Board-level executives consider themselves to be disabled. A research report by EY found that “more than half (56%) of global senior executives rarely or never discuss disability in their leadership agendas”. The report also noted that “senior leaders with a disabled family member are significantly more likely to report disability on their leadership agenda (54%) than senior leaders without a disabled family member (37%)”. Representation at Board and senior leadership is a crucial step in reflecting the world around us. Prior to starting your recruitment process, you need to review this checklist to make sure at the very minimum, you have followed an inclusive process for recruiting disabled senior leaders.

Rationale

Improving disability diversity at a senior level needs to be in an organisation’s ethos, from the recruitment process through to appointment and in working environments. Respondents to our call for evidence highlighted the importance of changing organisational perspective from ‘we will not discriminate’ to ‘we want you’ in order to attract disabled candidates. Visibility of senior disabled staff is seen as important to project a disability friendly organisational culture and provide role models to applicants. In addition, where roles were advertised was highlighted as important, with respondents claiming that to attract disabled candidates there is a need to go beyond traditional channels as these rarely work well for disabled people and advertise on disability specific website or engage with Disabled Peoples User Led Organisations (DPULO’s) to actively target skilled disabled people.

Institutionally senior appointment processes are complex and rightly designed to challenge applicants. However, for a disabled person these can be exaggerated and therefore barriers are built in to the process. Legally, employers are required to provide reasonable adjustments to level the playing field for disabled people, however respondents to the call for evidence frequently stated that these were rarely well delivered and did not have the desired impact.

While some respondents criticised the scheme, for being over reliant on self assessment, signing up to Disability Confident was frequently cited as an important step in improving disability diversity and displaying a ‘positive about disabled people image’



At the age of 26, disabled people in the UK are four times more likely to be out of work or not in education compared to non-disabled people.



1

Recruitment

Processes Checklist

- Does your action show that you welcome disabled candidates?**

Does your recruitment process show evidence of a clear and open image in encouraging applications from disabled people.

Action speaks louder - celebrate current disabled staff as part of your organisation's campaigns to improve the visibility of disabled people in senior leadership. If you need to use a stock image, get advice first.
- Have you looked outside your normal recruitment channel?**

Have you made a list of networks, organisations and websites outside of your traditional recruitment channels. This will give you an indication of where else you need to be targeting in order to get to those individuals who may not be aware of the opportunity. Evenbreak is a jobsite that matches disabled job seekers with suitable employers and Disabled Workers lists the latest job opportunities and provides a space where disabled people can showcase their skills online.
- Consider adjustments you can make early on in the recruitment process**

Have you thought about adjustments you can make early on in the recruitment process, such as not just saying that the document can be provided in a different format upon request, but as a minimum to make it available in different formats. 1) Full JD on website, 2) Available in PDF and 3) Available on MS Word with no tables so screen reading software can read it.
- Consider if a CV and Cover Letter will suffice for the role you are recruiting for**

Can your recruitment process allow for the application to be submitted using a CV and Cover Letter rather than an application portal. If this is not possible, how can prospective candidates with disabilities engage with you to make the request. Having a point of contact and number can be a helpful workaround for this.
- Be prepared to have the difficult conversation**

It is ok to have the conversations you deem difficult. Ask all candidates directly if they require adjustments throughout the recruitment process and if an impairment or condition is disclosed make sure the candidate is fully involved in the adjustments process. We have a helpful flowchart to guide the adjustments process. The BDF have produced a paid for guide on making reasonable adjustments and free information is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Become a disability confident employer**

Sign up to the disability confident scheme and fully engage with the scheme, this is a way to actively show any disabled candidates that you want them to join your organisation

Recruitment Pack

A recruitment pack is your message to the world and to prospective candidates. It should represent your organisation in the best possible light and is an opportunity to show your commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion beyond an 'equal opportunity statement'.

Rationale

Inaccessible recruitment packs were cited throughout the call for evidence process as a major barrier to disabled people – not only in entering work but in progressing into senior leadership. A number of disabled people, particularly those with a visual impairment, expressed their frustration with not being able to access and read recruitment packs with their screen reader where they were only supplied in PDF. Similar issues were described with reference to online forms on application portals. It was also highlighted that some deaf people find written English difficult to interpret. The inclusion of a broad equality statement was considered to be a positive addition to job packs however, many submissions noted that this must be followed up with practicalities.

Particularly with reference to Board appointments, some suggested flexing personal specification criteria to allow more disabled people to apply, for example, by putting more emphasis on the importance of lived experience and experiential knowledge to Boards rather than focusing solely on skills like financial management. It is a well known fact that many Boards recruit in their own image so think about flexing criteria away from, for example, financial management, and towards experiential knowledge or other valuable skills.



Always provide the pack in alternative formats

Always offer to provide documents in alternative formats like word, large print, easy read, braille, BSL and audio. Advice on producing information in accessible formats is available from the gov.uk website and a number of commercial organisations provide businesses with services which aid in the production of materials in accessible formats.



Consider expanding your equal opportunities statement in the pack

Ensure a broad equality statement is included in job packs like: 'We are an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.' Follow this up with the relevant practicalities disabled people request. ACAS have a helpful template

When writing criteria, consider the skills your Board or senior management team would benefit from rather than a specific educational background to support disabled candidates who may not have had access to educational opportunities. Evenbreak provide advice on writing a more inclusive job pack.

Spotlight Caroline Casey

Caroline Casey is an award-winning social entrepreneur and founder of #valuable and The Valuable 500 - a catalyst for an inclusion revolution that exists to position disability equally on the global business leadership agenda.

Committed to building a global movement on inclusive business for the 1.3 billion people in the world with a disability, over the past two decades she has set up several organisations and initiatives centred on disability business inclusion.

Her latest initiative, The Valuable 500, is an ambitious year-long campaign to get 500 businesses to commit to putting disability inclusion on their leadership agendas.

What is the most important factor for improving the representation of disabled people in senior leadership?

Having senior leadership speaking about and to disability experience. We currently know from EY research that 7% of our C Suite have a disability and 4/5 hide theirs - this stat needs to change for things to change. Also have leaders speak to family members with lived experience.

What advice would you give to organisations for improving their disability diversity at a senior level?

Disclose their lived experience of culture. Find other team members with similar lived experience to set up employee resource groups and get executive sponsorship

Launched at this year's World Economic Forum Annual Summit, Casey succeeded in bringing disability inclusion onto the main stage at DAVOS for the first time ever with the support of global business leaders.

Casey is also a TED speaker, Ashoka Fellow, Eisenhower Fellow, a past advisor for the Clinton Global Initiative, a One Young World Counsellor and is a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.

The Valuable 500 is supported by a host of global leaders including Sir Richard Branson, and Paul Polman, and International brands including Virgin Media and Omnicom.

What advice would you give to organisations for improving their disability diversity at a senior level?

Disability performance is currently not equally included on the D&I agenda. Therefore we do not have disability performance reporting. 56 % of our boards have never discussed disability. If disability is not being recognised as an equally strategic driver to business as all other inclusion agendas then it is difficult for the business to justify disability at senior level. Need executive sponsorship.



2

Working Environments



A quarter of employers (24 per cent) say they would be less likely to employ someone with a disability.

“I think there’s no two doubts about it that my development has been the result of being in a positive working environment with positive line managers at the time in critical points in my career that enabled me to grow and develop into this person I hope, both professionally and personally.”

Interview Respondent

Studies have shown that a positive working environment increases job satisfaction and productivity amongst employees: Having an open and accessible working environment should be viewed as a business imperative. In a 2012 Guardian article, CEO of Grey London Lucy Jamerson, stated that “By building an autonomous team with an open culture, we allow people to set their own agenda and have been able to attract new and diverse pools of talent.” Positive environments have clear benefits for disabled people. Allowing more flexible approaches to working paired with an inclusive culture can make accessing senior leadership more straight forward: consider if your working environment aligns with our checklist.

Rationale

Practical accessibility barriers have already been well documented in other toolkits relating to improving general workforce inclusion however the respondents to our call for evidence said there was still a long way to go in improving accessibility and this had an impact on their career. Disabled senior managers said that since they were required to travel for work, they were frequently unable to access meeting rooms or offices as a result of poor accessibility. A number of wheelchair users also expressed frustration with the difficulties in using public transport to travel across the UK. As an extension of this, a number of respondents were keen to note that Access to Work provides vital support to disabled people in the workplace.

Much like in recruitment processes, good provision of workplace reasonable adjustments were highlighted as vital even at a senior leadership level to ensure disabled people were able to do their job.

A positive and open workplace environment is also considered vital for disabled people with flexible working hours for everyone. For example, a number of respondents highlighted that 9.30am meetings are often difficult for people who encounter issues with using public transport or have impairments that make getting to work at this time difficult, however this could have a wider positive impact for all employees, for instance parents with school age children.

Specifically with reference to Board meetings, receiving Board documents a day before meetings was frequently cited as bad practice as a number of respondents said it took them longer to read or process the information as a result of their impairment.

There was frustration that Board chairs and other board members often don’t understand disability issues or how to provide adjustments to disabled Board members. A number of respondents highlighted the value of skills audits to a whole board which could be useful for not only raising the expectation of what disabled Board members can achieve but also identifying skills shortages on Boards.



2

Working Environments Checklist



66 per-cent of employers say the costs of workplace adjustments are a barrier to employing a disabled person.



Office accessibility

Do you have an accessible office and meeting space? CIPHR offer some advice on making offices more accessible.



Matching reasonable adjustment needs of your candidates

Have you sought advice on how to provide reasonable adjustments well? Not all disabled candidates require the same types of adjustments, it is critical to make sure you are providing the reasonable adjustments that supports each candidates needs. The best thing to do is to ask the candidate what they need.



Access to Work scheme

Does your HR department know about Access to Work and how to support a disabled employee in an application? Take a look at the gov.uk website for information on the scheme.



Inclusivity is a vital part of ensuring everyone feels welcome

Having a positive, open and flexible working culture allows everyone in the organisation to bring their authentic self to work at all times. Consider conducting a staff survey to confirm if this is true in your organisation. An independent and external organisation can be considered to carry out this activity.



Providing specific diversity and inclusion training

Do you provide disability awareness training to all relevant employees and board members? Disability awareness training is available from a number of organisations. These include: Disability Rights UK; Bascule Disability and, the Centre for Resolution.



Board away days accessibility considerations

Board away days are a great way for board members to get to know each other more outside of the board meetings. However, an additional consideration needs to be given to the locations they are held in to ensure disabled board members are suitably met.

3

Progressing Talent

“I have had line managers that I think have been champions and mentors to me, none of whom are disabled themselves. There are three in particular who have had a profound impact on how I've sort of developed and grown. I've grown as an individual professionally.”

Interview Respondent

A 2010 report by RADAR (now Disability Rights UK) makes a clear distinction between simply accommodating impairment by providing adjustments and spotting and developing talent. Indeed, RADAR claim that what really matters for progression is senior support throughout an individual's career and mentoring opportunities. They claim that disabled people are far less likely to get support like this and are therefore prevented from climbing the leadership ladder. As a minimum, consider if you provide one or more from our checklist.

Rationale

Disabled senior leaders frequently stated that they would not have reached their current position without the support of or mentoring from a senior colleague or the input of their line manager. Nevertheless, previous research has suggested that disabled people find it more difficult to obtain mentoring or related leadership development support than non-disabled people. Peer-to-peer support was also mentioned, with some DPULOs highlighting that they provide peer-to-peer networks and support services to their members. A pipeline issue was also identified by a number of respondents who claimed that disabled people tended to have received less educational opportunities than non-disabled people and this had prevented them from being able to reach a senior level. Whilst agreeing that some of the blame for this rests with the educational system, disabled respondents claimed that employers could do more to support the professional development of disabled employees and aid them into senior positions.

Best Practice Example Leonard Cheshire

Leonard Cheshire supports individuals to live, learn and work as independently as they choose, whatever their ability. Led by people with experience of disability, they are at the heart of local life, opening doors to opportunity, choice and support in communities around the globe.

They clearly celebrate disabled staff in their talent attraction strategies and advertise all their job opportunities, including clinical; care and head office positions on specific disability recruitment website Evenbreak.

Leonard Cheshire is a Disability Confident Leader and recommended that other organisations sign up to the scheme. They also stated during the call for evidence:

“Leonard Cheshire would like to see employers engaging in Disability Confident to report on job outcomes of the commitments they have made as part of the accreditation. More information is needed to assess whether the programme leads to changes in business practices that increase the recruitment and retention of disabled people. This would help strengthen the scheme and ensure that it acts as a recognised quality standard for people seeking jobs with disabled friendly employers.”

Leonard Cheshire make it clear that they provide support during the application process and ask for a CV and a covering letter as part of their process rather than complex online forms. They also provide a summary of the process on their website.



3

Progressing Talent Checklist



Mentoring programme

Do you have a mentoring programme for high potential disabled people? You can pair disabled employees with a senior leader for mentoring, advocacy and sponsorship. The Chartered Institute of Managers has some advice on developing internal mentoring scheme.

Does your Board have a buddy system for new Board members? You can consider pairing new board members who are disabled with a long serving Board member so they are able to grow in their role.



Peer-to-peer support networks

Do you have an internal peer-to-peer support networks for Disabled Employees? Purple Space help organisations to develop networks. This can provide a forum and support for new and existing disabled employees.

You can also consider supporting disabled employees to engage with external peer-to-peer networks as part of your organisation's internal scheme, especially if they are the only one in the organisation.



Providing support with professional development

Inclusivity is making schemes available to all without excluding others. Has consideration been given to disabled employees who are high-potential leaders to support their progression to senior leadership position.

Best Practice Example Lloyds Banking Group

More than 5,000 employees disclosed a disability in Lloyds' most recent staff survey. Further, Lloyds estimate that they serve around six million customers affected by disability or long term health issues.

As highlighted throughout this report, traditionally employment of disabled people in the UK has focused on making changes to physical infrastructure or working practices whilst accepting this remains important by providing a leading workplace adjustments programme, Lloyds want to move the debate from simply accommodating disabilities to developing talent and providing careers, not just jobs. Their disability commitment is spearheaded by David Oldfield, Group Director & CEO, Commercial Banking.

The Group offers development courses specific to disabled colleagues including a Personal Development Programme and Career Development Programme. These residential courses are run in conjunction with external disability consultants and have been described as life changing by previous attendees of the course. Lloyds claim that over 1,500 disabled colleagues have now benefited from these programmes

Lloyds also has an internal network for disabled employees called The 'Access Network'. Access aims to provide disabled colleagues with support, development and networking opportunities through various channels. It also supports disabled colleagues' line managers, with manager-specific information and upskilling. The network has an online Support Forum and intranet site with disability-related support, a mentoring scheme and a scheme connecting colleagues with various business areas who offer job shadowing opportunities.

Spotlight

George Feilding

George was chairman of the Whizz-Kidz Kidz Board for 5 years. Whizz-Kidz Kidz Board is made up of young wheelchair users who each represent a different area of the UK. As part of his work for the charity, George advised the government on transport, met the then Prime Minister David Cameron, was interviewed for television and gave presentations about the charities work to large audiences.

Why do you think there are so few disabled people working in senior leadership positions?

“The real nub of the problem is that often in the private and even the third sector employing disabled people, especially to Boards and senior leadership, is seen as a tick box exercise. It looks great for your PR and marketing to have a disabled person working in a senior position but done wrong it can be a very patronising process.

Often in the corporate world, the value of a skill is only if it's profit making but organisations forget that softer skills are also important.”

He was awarded the British Empire Medal for his work as a volunteer. George is now the Strategy, Fundraising and Engagement Lead for a charity he is setting up: Vnk you fort alorum Foundation. Throughout this report the importance of developing talent has been frequently cited as an important factor in increasing the number of disabled people in senior positions. The Whizz Kidz Kidz Board gives young disabled people the opportunity to have a meaningful say in the running of a charity and learn valuable strategic management, campaigning and public speaking skills.

Could you give me an idea about the kinds of challenges disabled people face as Board members?

“There are accessibility issues with organisations that perhaps haven't employed a disabled person before but I think a real problem, and this comes back to tokenism, is when you have a disabled person on your Board, everyone else gets actionables for the next meeting and the disabled person doesn't get any - it's almost like saying we don't trust you with anything other than giving us the disability perspective.”

Can you think of any solutions for improving the number of disabled people on Boards?

“Yes - I think technology like Skype is really underused. Video conferencing can make meetings accessible to far more people and it works so well now there is no reason not to use it.”



4

Engagement and Communication

In 2017 the UK government introduced voluntary pay gap reporting for organisations employing more than 250 people. The legislation requires employers to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. Reporting has garnered significant public attention and scrutiny, encouraging organisations to actively confront issues surrounding gender diversity. Such engagement would clearly be beneficial regarding disability diversity at a senior level. Some change needs to come from the top down, so consider our top tips in your organisational strategy.

Rationale

A number of respondents noted factors beyond day-to-day work which could support more disabled people to move into senior leadership and Board positions. In light of the success of compulsory gender pay gap reporting in raising awareness of continued sex discrimination in the workplace a number of respondents suggested that collating and publishing data with regards to disabled people would likely provoke a similar reaction. Scope has produced advice based on the voluntary reporting framework produced by the government for reporting on the number of disabled staff members to increase transparency, however going beyond this as many respondents suggest, and reporting the pay gap would also be of benefit. There is a fear of tokenism from disabled people when it comes to Board appointments, in that they would not be valued for their skills and experience but rather be appointed as a box ticking exercise. There is an onus on organisations and Boards to ensure they do not take this approach but rather value all Board members for their skills and experiences. One way to support this change would be to, as Purple and KPMG suggest, put disability on the agenda at Board meetings and have an open discussion about tackling the problem.

Best Practice Example Scope

In May 2019 Scope became the first organisation to use the government's framework to publish staff disability figures, finding that 17% of respondents to its staff survey had an Impairment, long term health condition or identified as disabled. Whilst this is below the proportion of working age disabled people in the UK which currently stands at 18.6% the report has allowed Scope to build a strategy to improve its disability diversity and wellbeing of staff.

As a result of their experience in reporting their disability diversity figures Scope published advice to other organisations to aid them in reporting their own disability diversity figures. They hope that such reporting will have a similar impact to gender pay-gap and workforce reporting and enable more disabled people to move into senior leadership.



4

Engagement and Communication Checklist



Measuring distance travelled

In order to continuously measure your impact, it needs to be backed up by evidence. Why not consider using the gov.uk and Scope charity's advice to report on disabled staff numbers and the disability pay gap?



Putting disability on the agenda

Put disability on the agenda at Board and in senior leadership meetings and actively tackle unconscious bias.

Put together a plan on how to tackle lack of disabled people on the Board and in senior leadership teams. The plan should be embedded into your organisational strategy and business plan.



Avoid tokensim

Remember disabled people bring value beyond their impairment.

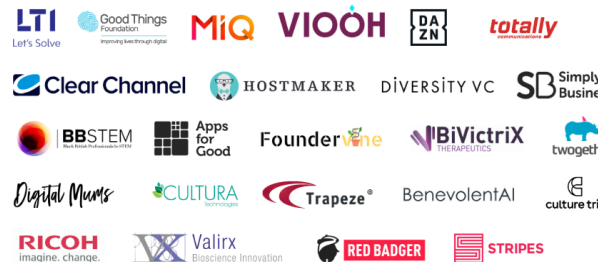
About the Inclusive Tech Alliance (ITA)

The Inclusive Tech Alliance (ITA) is a membership body dedicated to increasing diversity in the tech sector, working alongside a variety of stakeholders.

To achieve its aims the objectives of the alliance (ITA) are two-fold:

1. To improve all strands of diversity and inclusion within the UK tech sector, with a specific focus on leadership.
2. To tackle the technical skills shortages the country is facing by combining efforts and sharing best practice.

ITA MEMBERS



5

Technological Solutions

Inclusive Boards is proud to power an industry leading technology campaign: The Inclusive Tech Alliance, in association with the Financial Times. We have researched a number of innovative Assistive Technology (AT) solutions which might support disabled people and organisations to confront some of the barriers to leadership outlined in this toolkit.

AT makes a huge difference to the lives of disabled people, helping them to live more independently. Today only 1 in 10 people in need have access to assistive technology due to a lack of awareness, availability, trained personnel, policy, and financing. Advances in technology mean AT is improving rapidly and becoming cheaper. Some remains specialist but it is often integrated into everyday gadgets. As AT develops it could have a transformative impact on the disability diversity at a senior level and represents a huge opportunity to revolutionise disabled people's experiences in the workplace. The Work and Pensions Select Committee report on assistive technology includes a number of case studies on how AT can support disabled people in wor.

Rationale

Smart phones now have extensive built in AT. Apple's iPhone comes with a VoiceOver mode which reads out what's on the screen, FaceTime and other video conferencing allows for visual communication, such as British Sign Language or remote meetings. A number of phones can also be operated without touch using facial movements and the ability to receive textphone calls without specialist hardware is often a standard. All of these innovations make managing day to day work more manageable for disabled people and should aid in countering employers fears regarding disabled people's ability to work and the cost of adjustments.

As part of the Access to Work scheme the government recently launched an AT fund - offering employers significant discounts on technology to support disabled employees. Software integration solutions are available to combine assistive technology with existing in-house systems. This allows disabled people full use of the in-house software, therefore supporting them properly in their career.



Access to work can pay 100 per cent of costs if applied for in the first six weeks of an individual's employment and can fund eligible costs up to £59,200. (2019/20)



5

Technological Solutions Checklist



Mobile phone apps that support disabled people

In addition to built-in smart phone features app developers are constantly creating new applications to aid disabled people working in senior positions and beyond. Some examples include:

- Present Pal, a presentation software designed to help people with dyslexia give presentations.
- Be My Eyes connects visually impaired people with sighted volunteers via video chat to aid in daily tasks which might require visual assistance



Assistive Technology Fund

As part of the Access to Work scheme the government recently launched an AT fund – offering employers significant discounts on technology to support disabled employees. AbilityNet supports disabled people to use technology at work, home or in education settings.



Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Using artificial intelligence software, Microsoft recently developed live captions and subtitles in Skype and Powerpoint making meetings more accessible to those with hearing impairments.

Best Practice Example Virgin Media

Virgin Media recently launched a full review of their workplace support for disabled people and have started a number of initiatives to improve the experiences of disabled people in work. These include:

- Developing a buildings accessibility standard that will be rolled out to all its sites, this included developing new toilet signage that is more inclusive of invisible disabilities.
- Creating a new disability awareness module for employees and a guide for line managers.

- Working with their resourcing partners to make sure accessibility is considered throughout the recruitment process.
- Launching a dedicated font to make it easier for people with dyslexia to digest content on screen.

They also plan to:

- Develop new people policies to better support disabled people.
- Train all senior leaders in how to be aware of, and overcome, unconscious bias.
- Update their workplace adjustments process to enable disabled people to get the very best experience and environment they need.

Virgin Media and Scope's 'Work with Me' partnership includes extensive resources for organisations to aid in tackling disability issues in the workplace. These include:

- A guide to managing workplace adjustments.
- A cheat sheet to using Access to Work.
- A line managers guide to disability.
- An accessible meetings guide.

Spotlight

Neil Barnfather

Neil started his career at Nokia, gaining an insight into the global technology industry. This inspired his entrepreneurial spirit and he subsequently went on to develop nineteen tech and e-commerce related businesses spanning a multitude of sectors and industries. Neil has over twenty years of experience in directorial positions and eight years as an International Business Ambassador for the British Chambers of Commerce.

Why do you think there are so few disabled people working in senior leadership?

Prejudice! Until we have disabled CEO's and C suite execs receiving prominent positions nothing will change visibility in senior roles is vital - the problem is its chicken and egg situation.

In my experience Boards aren't looking for us - they say they are! They make the right noise but they need to be active and change their processes fundamentally to translate into achieving the objective.

Can you give me an idea about what solutions could be put in place?

Disabled people are by nature entrepreneurial - out of the box thinking about real problems are a central part of their day to day lives so there is a huge market opportunity but employers are frankly not bothered. The government needs to get tough with businesses and take this issue seriously. Ultimately the price is not only that of social consequential benefit, but, from the welfare perspective employed disabled people are taxpayers rather than benefit claimants.

Neil was invested as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours list (2014) for services to the Telecommunications Industry and People with Visual Impairments. He is listed on the Power 100 (2014/15/16), and is currently ranked 10th in the business category on The List - Britain's most influential and powerful disabled people as collated by DNS.

What challenges do disabled people face in senior leadership recruitment processes?

There is often absolutely zero consideration for making sure job adverts reach a diverse audience. Organisations miss the fact that places like LinkedIn aren't accessible for disabled candidates and so are often unaware that the role is even there in the first place!

Often employers don't want your CV - they want you to fill out massive anonymised online forms which are just impossible for screen reader users and completely discriminatory for someone who is blind. Recruitment processes need to be revisited.



6

Beyond the Toolkit

"I think there is a real challenge there really about supporting those who have been disabled since birth, in terms of education, training opportunities and career opportunities."

Interview Respondent

The cross-government strategy, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* (2005) set out the objective that by 2025, 'disabled people in Britain should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life, and will be respected and included as equal members of society'.

The strategy was based on four areas: Supporting independent living; Improving support to families of disabled children; Supporting a smooth transition into adulthood and, Improving support and incentives for attaining and maintaining employment.

In spite of previous policy efforts, a number of respondents commented on the government providing further solutions that could be implemented to tackle the issues surrounding the representation of disabled people in senior leadership. Whilst beyond the scope of this toolkit, they are included here as government action which was deemed vital to addressing the challenges disabled people face in climbing into senior leadership.



There are more disabled women than men in the UK. (23% compared to 19%).

Recommendations to Government

- **Government to clarify the impact of remuneration packages on benefits.**

A number of disabled people rely on government provision to ensure independent living, however remuneration packages can have an adverse impact on benefits packages, as such it is vital that government provides advice and guidance to disabled people taking a remunerated post.

- **Government to review ways to increase educational opportunities for disabled people .**

pipeline issues, highlighted throughout this report are vital to ensuring disabled people are able to access senior roles. It is therefore important that the government reviews how to provide suitable educational opportunities for disabled people.

- **Government to clarify the legal situation regarding the provision of reasonable adjustments to volunteers.**

there is currently no legal provision for providing reasonable adjustments to volunteers. Whilst many employers ensure adjustments in spite of this, during the call for evidence disabled people stated that the government should consider enshrining this in legislation in order to make sure adjustments are provided to volunteers, who may be trustees, as well as paid employees.



In Focus

Disabled People's User Led Organisations (DPULOs)

Disabled People's User Led Organisations (DPULOs) are organisations run by and for disabled people. In order to be classified as a DPULO organisations must have, or be able to demonstrate working towards having:

- A "governing body" (such as the Management Board) made up of at least 75% disabled people.
- Disabled people make up at least 50% of staff.
- Disabled people make up at least 50% of volunteers.

DPULOs are proof that it is possible to recruit skilled disabled people to sit in senior leadership positions as well as have a high percentage of disabled staff members.

DPULOs have an important role in changing perceptions surrounding disabled people, giving disabled people a stronger voice in the local community and providing peer support. They also have a wealth of knowledge on disability issues and can be a fantastic partners for improving the representation of disabled people in organisations and subsequently senior leadership. There are local DPULOs in most areas of the country.

Shaping our Lives is a network of service users and disabled people which has a list of member organisations that can be searched regionally - why not reach out to your local DPULO and consider an external partnership to boost your understanding and improve your organisations diversity.

Spotlight

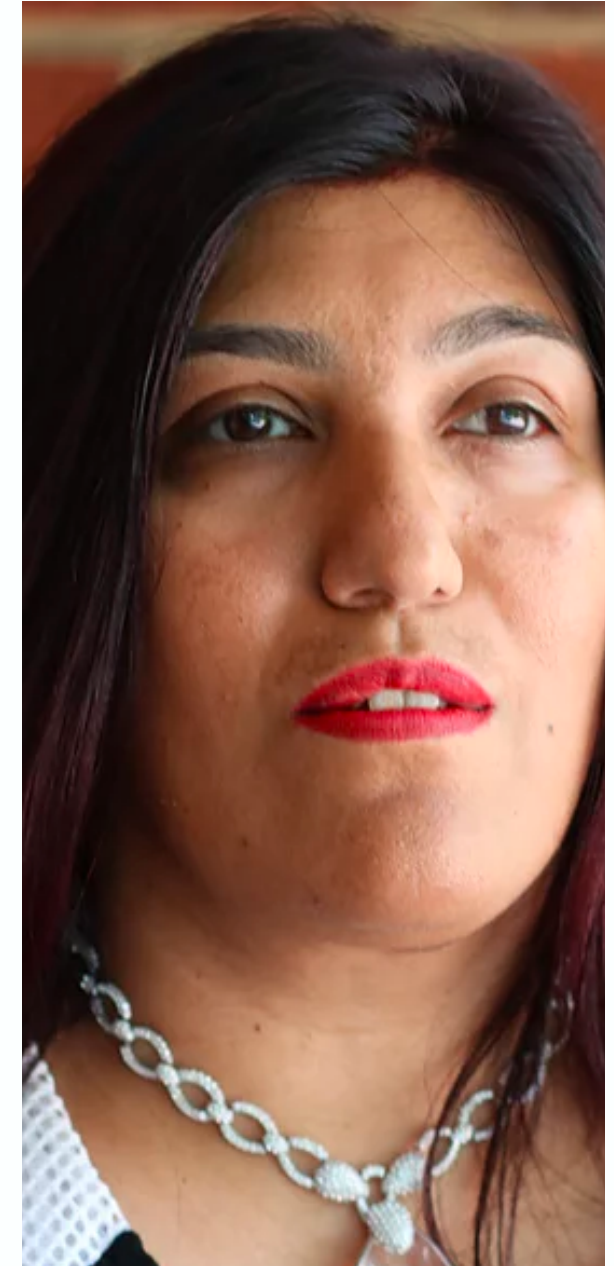
Seema Flower

Seema Flower is an energetic, engaging and passionate Disabilities & Visual Awareness expert with the ability to think strategically and act tactically across sectors. Seema is Founder and Managing Director of Blind Ambition – a consultancy with a difference – to create inclusivity. For over 25 years, Seema has delivered successful training and projects for leading institutions which have yielded desired outcomes. These accomplishments have helped her gain relevant experience in training which has been transferred into various settings. For example, she has raised awareness by delivering disability training and visual awareness to medical students, retail and business personnel making businesses disability confident and inclusive, training staff within schools and colleges, other service providers as well as empowered vulnerable youth in prisons to reach their full potential in spite of the constraints of being incarcerated.

Seema is an inspirational and experienced professional, advocate and disability rights champion who has enthused many people to achieve their full ambition and potential through telling her own story. She has been registered blind since she was 9 years old, however this has not stopped her building a successful chain of businesses and property portfolio. She has developed resilience and a unique gift for inspiring others through the many challenges she has overcome daily and over the past four decades of living with blindness.

Seema is also a qualified coach and career counsellor. She brings a wealth of experience and a truly unique insight into the Disability and Visual Awareness field as well as strategies for improving the experiences of those vulnerable and excluded groups in society. In recognition of her achievements, she has recently won London 2018, Venus Awards for Inspirational Woman of the Year (dubbed by Channel 4 as the Working Women's Oscars) 1. Seema has worked as part of the M&S Access Committee (DDA) which visited stores across the country and recommended changes and improvements to stores.

Seema is a recognised entrepreneurial visionary who has contributed business insight with previous UK Disabilities Minister Justin Tomlinson, Easy Group's Richard Shackleton, New Covent Garden Soup's Founder and many more. She also has 12 years experience of running her own service based businesses in Central London, 10 years experience of working as an Education Office for the RNIB, 5 years working as a Careers Advisor in West London and 20 years as a Private Landlord. Seema is confident and astute with excellent communication skills which have enabled her to become a media personality and influencer. She is in regular demand from the BBC and other media organisations for TV, Radio, online and print interviews to discuss disability issues and associated entrepreneurial challenges and effective strategies for overcoming these challenges. She has a unique and fresh perspective and a message which resonates with audiences across the country. 'I aspire to reach as many groups and individuals as possible with an impactful message that has become our mark with the aim of reducing the inequalities and social isolation that many face within our society.'



Final Thoughts



The Great Britain Paralympic team has never finished outside the top five in Paralympic games and has been second several times, including the last five games in 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016.

There is a clear case for increasing the number of disabled people on Boards and in senior leadership positions. The business case for diversity makes it clear that more representative senior teams offer a wider variety of view points which improves decision-making and problem-solving. While some sector specific and historical efforts have been made to improve the number of disabled people working in senior leadership, limited advice for organisations and sectors trying to tackle the problem is available.

This toolkit makes a number of important recommendations to organisations to aid them in increasing the disability diversity of their senior teams and of their Boards – building the foundations and aiding talented disabled people to progress into more senior positions. Practicing inclusive recruitment will allow disabled people to identify and succeed in obtaining senior roles, a key element of this includes increasing the visibility of senior disabled leaders and inspiring young disabled people to follow their example. Inclusive working environments will aid disabled people in day-to-day work and provide more opportunities to progress. Such environments are however of benefit to everyone. Spotting and progressing disabled talent through mentoring opportunities is vital to supporting the pipeline of disabled people moving into senior leadership. Reporting on disability workforce numbers and putting disability on organisations leadership agendas will serve to actively tackle the problems from the top down.

We identified significant long term pipeline challenges for improving the representation of disabled people in senior leadership which will take a number of years to confront, such as educational barriers and societal attitudes. In spite of this, there are a number of easy steps which can be taken now to build the foundation for more diverse senior teams.

It is no easy task, but, there is no reason why the proportion of disabled people working in senior leadership cannot reflect wider society.

End Note

Psychologists on Boards

Inclusive Boards would like to thank Annabel Poate-Joyner and Dr Shungu Hilda M'gadzah for taking the time to provide some reflections on this report from a psychological perspective.

This Toolkit provides us with some really helpful evidence and thinking about many crucial issues for facilitating greater inclusion of disabled people in senior Leadership and Board roles.

Disabled people are an untapped resource with such a lot to offer. As individuals, they are likely to be adaptable, resourceful and problem-solving because of their experiences. Impairments affect people in different ways and it is important to consider each individual's experiences. Some disabilities are clearly evident, while others are hidden conditions – individuals may want to keep them hidden through fear of being stigmatised or having their career opportunities adversely affected. We should also take into account the intersectional invisibility faced by different groups. It is therefore important to ensure support is offered in a sensitive and flexible way once the individual has disclosed their disability.

There are numerous reasons for an individual to be considered disabled, and equally each disabled person has different issues and concerns requiring an individualised approach developed for them and their needs. It is important not to leap to generalised assumptions about anything. There is certainly no “one size fits all” approach. Instead, individualised support and reasonable adjustments need to be negotiated between the individual and their managers, occupational health or human resources departments in order to maximise the contribution an individual can make in the organisation, whether as a formal employee or volunteer, advisor or trainer.

The very best person to know what can facilitate a disabled person in managing their needs in their various environments is the individual person themselves. There are also specialist professionals and services with a range of approaches, adjustments and aids who can plan with the individual person around their needs, in order to provide them with as much practical assistance and support as possible so that they can just get on and perform their role.

We have already heard how assistive technology (AT) is rapidly evolving to provide all sorts of aids to communication and physical needs. Other forms of reasonable adjustments may be reduced or flexible hours, taxis to reduce practical accessibility problems, a room with a bed or a fridge for those who need to carry out certain procedures during their working day, allowing specially-trained assistance dogs in the work-place, voice-activated devices or robots, and paid carers to provide care in situ.

Employers must learn to value and respect the additional strengths, perspectives, life experiences and diversity which disabled people will undoubtedly bring as employees, volunteers and advisors at all levels of their organisations.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach for the purpose of our data collection followed assumptions of the emancipatory disability research paradigm.

'Emancipatory research is about the demystification of the structures and processes which create disability, and the establishment of a workable dialogue between the research community and disabled people. To do this researchers must put their knowledge and skills at the disposal of disabled people. They do not have to have impairments themselves to do this' (Barnes, 1992, p. 122).

The evidence collection process was specifically designed to ensure disabled people were able to exert control over the research process. Thoughts on the direction and scope of the project were considered and incorporated when raised. The assumptions of the social model of disability were also at the centre of the research approach.

Literature Review

Inclusive Boards (IB) conducted an extensive review of available online literature, published reports and other sources relating to definitions of disability, disability and employment and disability and senior leadership in the UK.

Our findings were grouped thematically, covering models of disability, government policy and initiatives and current recommendations for organisations to improve the disability diversity of their senior teams.

Primary Research

Survey: Inclusive Boards commissioned Survation to ask their business leaders omnibus about their views on senior leadership and disability. 1002 responses were received and the results were analysed in detail by the IB research team.

Call For Evidence: The call sought to gain perspectives; insights and testimony from senior disabled people and stakeholders on the barriers disabled people face in obtaining and working in senior leadership positions and ideas on how they can be tackled. These submissions of evidence were accepted in writing; taken over the phone and in person. The process was organic, allowing individuals to share their thoughts and dictate the direction of the research, in total, 40 submissions were accepted.



82% of disabled customers would spend more money if websites were accessible.

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Disability in Leadership Toolkit

Striving to improve the representation of disabled people in senior leadership