HR INSIGHTS

Recruitment Accessibility & Removing Barriers

Researched and compiled by:

yolk

Leonard Cheshire

REFRESHING LAW

Down to Earth

June 2022

Leonard Cheshire

Leonard Cheshire are a global charity helping individuals to live, learn and work independently, whatever their ability. They are lead by disabled people and at the heart of the community, established in care homes, employment services and offer training and consultancy to employers. In 2021, Leonard Cheshire supported over 70,000 people around the world. Leonard Cheshire's training and consultancy team deliver training with an interest on inclusive recruitment and helps businesses to develop policies and processes that to make recruitment more accessible. For more information on Leonard Cheshire's services for business, contact Kirsteen Allison.
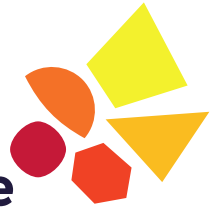
Kirsteen Allison

Kirsteen is a training and consultancy advisor at Leonard Cheshire. She has worked in equality and diversity for over 25 years and has worked for organizations such as Skills Development Scotland and the DWP. She has volunteered with disability organisations and provided support to the Scottish and UK governments.

Kirsteen is hearing and visually impaired and used a communication support worker during this session.

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Disability Within the Workforce – the Facts

Leonard Cheshire's research shows that 22% of the UK population has a disability or a long-term condition. There is a lot of untapped talent that is not being reached by recruiters, and lots of employers lack understanding when it comes to disability and hiring and supporting disabled staff. The COVID-19 pandemic had a large impact on operations and recruitment. Some organizations say it's harder to recruit than before, but they might not realise that there's a large pool of untapped talent out there that are not being reached.

The figure of 22% is only those who have chosen to share their status as a disabled person. The actual figure could be a lot higher due to the way questions are worded, and whether or not someone identifies as disabled. As someone might be more likely to acquire a condition as they get older than they are to be born with one, you could very likely be working with someone who is disabled but might not have shared. We also need to remember that not every condition is visible.

In 2018, 26% of businesses said they had never interviewed a disabled candidate. Considering disabilities that are not visible and the people who have not chosen to share whether they have a disability, this figure might not be as accurate as the businesses believe it to be. Leonard Cheshire's 2021 research found that disabled people are less likely to be employed than non-disabled people. That's a gap of 28%, and a pay gap of 15%, which equates to £3000 less a year in earnings.

69% of employers cited the cost of adjustment as a barrier to recruiting disabled people. What employers might not realise is the majority of adjustments cost nothing at all, and it can be as simple as writing something down for someone hearing impaired. Let's look a bit more at the duty to make adjustments during recruitment.

The Legal Definition of Disabled

Under the Equality Act 2010, somebody is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

What does "substantial" and "long-term" mean?

'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, eg it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed.

'long-term' means 12 months or more, eg a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.

Not every barrier in recruitment will be to do with disability, though!

Making Reasonable Adjustments

An adjustment is a change that removes or significantly reduces a barrier faced by a disabled person.

Under the **Equality Act 2010,** employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment and selection process. You must make adjustments where you know, or could reasonably be expected to know, that an applicant is placed at a substantial disadvantage as a result of disability. Reasonably expected to know means considering what barriers can be removed in advance and being alert to the signs that someone is experiencing a barrier.

At the recruitment stage, **we need to legally make adjustments and remove barriers.** You still need to be mindful not to provide adjustments during recruitment that you couldn't provide if they were offered the role. It's important to be realistic about the adjustments during the recruitment process and being able to provide them during the job. So, while you don't need to worry too much about the fine details of the adjustments during the job, you still need to be mindful not to offer anything that you couldn't do during the actual employment – you don't want to get them up to fail.

When assessing skills, don't adjust the way there's an assessment because that can set an individual up to fail. A fair assessment needs to be conducted, however. In this case, an adjustment might be allowing extra time for dyslexia, or having the same assessment on a computer as opposed to in a printed format. Before we make adjustments we need to understand what the barriers are. It's important not to assume an individual's needs and barriers – instead, let them tell you. For example, if a deaf individual who doesn't use sign language came for an interview and was offered a sign language interpreter, that would be making the mistake of going straight to the adjustments and making assumptions before understanding what the barriers are.

The Social Model of Disability
The Social Model believes that people are disabled not by their impairments but by the barriers that exist in society. The impairment is not the barrier, **it's society that disables us.** A common example to illustrate the Social Model is a flight of stairs. If someone can't get into a building, is the problem the wheelchair or is it the fact that there's no ramp? Under the Social Model, we would say it's because there's no ramp.

The Social Model encourages you to shift your thinking away from seeing the impairment as the barrier to understanding what it is in society that disables people. We need to move away from seeing disability as a problem, to understanding what we can do to make equality happen.

Identifying Barriers

Ideally, we should try to anticipate barriers and remove them in advance, but sometimes that isn't always possible. So how can we spot the sign that someone's experiencing a barrier? Some signs could be obvious, such as they've got a sign language interpreter. Maybe they use a wheelchair. Maybe they're limping, maybe they have a bandage or maybe they have hearing aids. These are all things that can be obvious to spot, but some signs can be less apparent, and not every barrier is disability related.

We can make communication more accessible by providing information in different ways. It's advisable to provide as much information as possible in advance so that individuals know what to expect and they're able to identify any barriers in advance so that there's no surprises on the day.

An example of an adjustment could be an alternative location or doing the interview or assessment remotely. Perhaps providing information in advance about how they can travel there – what buses, what trains are available locally and whether you have any parking. These are all things that can help people to highlight any barriers to you and request any adjustments for the interview or the assessment.

Technology can also present a barrier. If someone is visually or hearing impaired, then the barrier could be using a laptop or using a telephone. On online application forms, a barrier presents itself in the form of mandatory fields such as email or telephone. Someone who has a hearing impairment would struggle with a phone interview, and someone with pain in the hand would struggle with typing emails. Having the option to use email or phone makes the process more inclusive.

Ensuring websites are screen reader compatible can help inclusivity. Simple changes don't have to cost money either. For example, alternative fonts that could be larger, a different colour or in a more legible style are things that don't have to cost anything to do.
Be aware of the different ways we can all communicate. Some people might require as a sign language interpreter. Some people might be more comfortable with an online interview because they might feel uncomfortable in a company and in crowded settings. Some people might prefer to do the interview face-to-face. Some people might prefer different formats. There's a lot of different ways we communicate without speaking and not every not every adjustment has to cost anything.

Think about someone's appearance in terms of barriers. if someone is doing a video interview but you can't see them on screen, maybe they have anxiety about being on screen. If someone is late for an interview, perhaps they couldn't find accessible parking nearby and not because they are unreliable. If someone has speech that isn't very clear, it doesn't necessarily mean that they're drunk – they might have an impairment that affects their

speech. They might stutter, maybe they're on medication that affects their speech and makes their speech very slurred.

The way we word things can be important in removing barriers. Somebody might be giving the wrong answers in an interview or an application form because the question is worded in a way that that isn't very clear to them. As an example, if you ask someone "if you were a biscuit what biscuit would you be?", that could cause confusion. If you asked, "tell me about yourself", it might not be clear that what you really want is their career history.

There could be lots of signs that people are experiencing a barrier. You could have someone who doesn't make eye contact, you could have someone who is distressed. It's important to remember that barriers aren't always related to disabilities. It doesn't necessarily mean there's an impairment causing the barrier, but you can still spot some signs that there's a barrier there.

Identifying as Disabled

We previously mentioned the figure of 22% is only those who have shared that they have a disability or a long-term condition. You may have applicants who don't share that they have a disability. How they identify and whether they share is a personal choice. People resist labels. They might be afraid of stigma, they may have had a bad experience in a previous employment. They might not feel that they experienced any barriers.

There are people who have hearing aids and they lip-read and that is fine and they don't want anything more than that. Some people don't need or want any adjustments. Everybody is different. They might identify as being dyslexic or d/Deaf but not disabled. In an application form that only asks are you disabled? With the only options being yes / no / prefer not to say, an individual might tick no. If given a list of impairments, they might select one from that list. How someone answers a question depends not just on how it's asked but how they identify. Your data monitoring might be improved by revisiting how the question is asked.

The language we use can also impact whether they share. The word disclose is often used when talking about disclosing an offence but being disabled is not an offense. The word disclose could imply that this disability is a big deal – a secret or a bad thing, so choose to say share instead of disclose because it's more positive.

To encourage people to share what their barriers are and what adjustments could remove those barriers, we need organisations to explain why they want the information and be clear on how they will use that information. Taking actions to include people and talking about what you're doing can give people a reason to share information.

7 Top Tips for Disability Inclusion

1 Demonstrating that you have disability inclusive cultures can really make a difference. You can create an inclusive culture by arranging disability awareness training. You can develop clear policies on equality and diversity, and guidance on making adjustments, something that manages and hiring managers and recruitment teams can look at if they feel unsure. Training can help them prepare too.

2 The Disability Confident Scheme is a free scheme to join and that can help you to attract disabled talent. It can also encourage people to share their disability or long-term condition because they can see that you are committed to disability inclusion.

3 Ensure that all venues, websites, and communications are accessible. Give people all the information on travelling to the venue, including availability of accessible parking. Could you do the interview or the assessment, or even the job from a different location? If they are expected to work on the fifth floor, could you move them to the ground floor? Could you move them to another venue, or could they do the interview remotely? Are they wheelchair accessible?

4 Think about the image you're putting online. Could the website be putting people off? If all your images are of non-disabled white men, could that put off people who are disabled if they don't see people like them?

5 Consider adjustments every stage of the recruitment process, not just the interview. If you're sending out an email, how accessible that email? Is the font too small? Are you mentioning that you can make adjustments in that email? Are you providing links to any relevant policies? Every stage is important.

6 Think about any roadblocks in your current recruitment process. If people are applying but pulling out before the interview stage, then explore the barriers before that stage. What could it be? Could it be that email format? Could it be the website accessibility? Could it be the information you're providing is not very clear? Are you not telling them what to prepare, how to get there? Many different things that could happen before the interview stage and therefore it's important to consider accessibility and inclusive design before that date.

7 Give information at every stage of the recruitment process. Make sure your candidates are fully prepared, they know what to expect and the more information that you provide, the better able they will be to identify barriers and highlight them to you. Make sure that everybody knows the importance of making those adjustments and know that how an applicant can request them.

Anna Denton Jones

Anna Denton-Jones, an Oxford University graduate in law who qualified in 2000. She has dealt with thousands of cases including the most complex complaints. She spends approximately 30% of her time on tribunal work, the rest is trying to avoid people needing to get there. Her focus is on resolving cases as swiftly and sensibly as practicable to the benefit of her clients.

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An Overview on Long COVID

Managers often don't know that they're working with somebody with a disability and acquired conditions in adulthood. Long COVID is a classic example of an acquired and potentially invisible condition. The current definition of long COVID is where the symptoms persist beyond a four-week period. There doesn't seem to be a link between how serious the COVID was when an individual had it and their long-term symptoms.

There are people who were even asymptomatic at the time when they first tested positive who have then gone on to experience problems that have lasted. The ONS are estimating that one in five people are still experiencing symptoms five weeks after first testing positive. One in ten people are still experiencing symptoms after 12 weeks. When extrapolated across the whole population of the UK, that leads to big numbers.

1 in 5
people are still experiencing symptoms 5 weeks after testing positive

For the purposes of this whitepaper, we'll only be looking at the people who are experiencing symptoms that are going to give them issues as regards work. The ONS is currently estimates that 1.8 million people fall into this category. This may not be a fully accurate figure due to people putting their condition down to other things, such as menopause, or problems with their mental health. The numbers are probably higher than those statistics would suggest, and it is now becoming a major cause of absence for employers alongside stress.

One of the challenges surrounding long COVID is that the symptoms people are reporting are very varied and affect them in different ways – not dissimilar to disabilities. When dealing with absences related to long COVID, we can't make assumptions. We need to be speaking to the person about how long COVID is affecting them in particular. Common reported problems are fatigue and breathlessness.

One of the big problems with these things is the fact that it fluctuates. You may already have experience of dealing with employees with disabilities where they're not feeling the same on a day-to-day basis. Long COVID is not a linear recovery, so while you might have a staged return to work plan with individuals with other illnesses normally where they're coming, you might have to be more flexible due to the nature of the condition.

Is it a Disability?

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights have said we can't say long COVID is a disability in the way that we have got in the legislation. Section six of the Equality Act 2010 talks about whether or not somebody's impairment is having a long-term effect on their ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities and when surveys are done, the numbers that are reporting that long COVID is adversely affecting the ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities (6.7%). A smaller percentage, just under 2%, says it affects them a lot.

> **We ultimately don't know if it is a disability for the purposes of the law until we get in front of a judge. This is a very long process.**

The process to determine whether long COVID is a disability is a long one that requires the courts. In this instance, it's easier to assume it is, because that's the safest thing to do and act accordingly. This will help businesses prevent trouble that they might otherwise if they didn't take this as a serious issue. It is important to treat people on a case-by-case basis and assess the risk.

Fluctuating Conditions & Return to Work

We have to understand how somebody's particular health is and how their particular impairment is affecting them and not make assumptions. Potentially, it could be a disability and businesses need to be acting accordingly.

What's preventing businesses from getting it right?

Firstly, a big issue for individuals is regarding the communication they receive from their workplace. Relationships starts to deteriorate immediately where employees feel ignored and abandoned. Employees will often say "I've worked at this organization for x years and they haven't even been in touch with me". On the reverse, some employees feel pressure from management regarding their return to work too soon. Training for line managers around how to handle absence is always important. It's important for managers to have empathy and to not leave their staff feeling neither neglected or nagged.

As employers, we need to be realistic about the fact that we are going to have absences from work. Employees need different periods of time off for different things during their careers and businesses should plan their workforces around that. If that means employing more people so there's got some flexibility and cover in the system, then that's on us as the employer. It's not the employee's fault if absence hasn't been factored in and dealt with accordingly.

The pandemic has taught us that our sick pay structures are probably not fit for purpose across the whole UK, with Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) being the primary focus. As a society, we need to ask ourselves if SSP enables people to still be able to afford to live. With the cost living crisis, this is going to become much more of an issue. Many employers are looking at what they can do around sick pay. Is it good enough? Do we need to make changes? That factor will feed in here.

Return to Work

When it comes to preparing for the return to work, standard return to work plans are often six weeks long without regard to medical condition. These often start with working half a day and gradually building up to working full time with a linear graduation to that point. It has become clear that this format doesn't work for everyone, and we need to be more flexible with our return to work policies. Somebody coming back where they have been off work for a while may be wanting to return to normality as soon as possible as well but apprehensive about how they're going to juggle everything. By factoring in the up and down nature of the symptoms that they might be having, some kind of flexibility within that plan might be necessary. Managers should have an understanding that they might need to revise that plan and be prepared to go back a stage and extend it for longer.

Businesses are often quite good at supporting people in the immediate return but often fall short where they have been very supportive at the beginning and made lots of changes and adjustments but have forgotten to continue the support over time. It's important to periodically reflect on a condition and ask how it's developing. People's needs change so keep this in mind when making reasonable adjustments. This might affect performance management, or sickness absence management – so think about reasonable adjustments at every stage of the employment life cycle.

Good questions to ask ourselves include:

▶ Do we need to have mentorship?
▶ Do we need to make sure the manager is having regular meetings with that person to check in with them?
▶ How is it going?
▶ What adjustments can we make?

Changing Mindsets

Some managers mindsets are often very negative, with the focus on how they can remove a person as opposed to making it work or providing support.

A survey from May 2022 by Samsung uncovered that 45% of people are uncomfortable talking about disability. Problems often start where people don't feel confident to have the conversations. Training for managers is really important for all medical conditions (including long COVID) so that the manager is able to ask simple questions, such as, "tell me about how it's affecting you, what can we do to help?". The employee is the best guide as to what they think would help them, so management should follow their lead. Medical advice can be useful, but it is important to ask the individual.

Mindset change needs to happen from both directions. In Mind's WRAP discussions for mental health issues, one of the questions looks at what people are going to be doing as an employee. These might be simple things, such as getting a good night's sleep, or fresh air and exercise, eating properly and taking annual leave to relax.

After working through the pandemic, many employers have learned that we're able to work flexibly and remotely. The ability to work outside of the office could help employers recruit more disabled people into their workforce. There is an opportunity for HR to be driving the positive, inclusive aspects within the employment model.

As soon as we know that there is a barrier, we are expected to look at what can we do to remove that barrier to level the playing field. As Lady Justice Hale said many years ago, it is about more favourable treatment of those with a disability – allowing disabled people to benefit from something that an able-bodied person is not allowed to do or something that other people might view as an advantage in some way, should instead be looked at of removing the disadvantage they have.

Understanding Medical Conditions

Employers aren't an expert on medical conditions. The key to making reasonable adjustments is getting medical advice, and doctors will be able to give us ideas as to things that they think medically would be helpful. GPs might not be able to provide the support needed for employees, so despite the cost, it might be worth speaking to occupational health. Ultimately, the best guide on this is always going to be the individual and this might require adjustments to either their job role or the working environment.

Employers should take some time to understand the things individuals are struggling with and what they can do to help. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) have materials available on their website on how to support colleagues affected with long COVID. Some of the things they have suggested are:

- Working from home, or hybrid working
- Flexibility over start times
- Greater flexibility over last-minute absences
- Refining absence management procedures
- Amending job tasks to make the role less cognitively or physically demanding
- Changing the pattern of a working day
- Additional breaks throughout the day
- Equipment adjustments
- Time off for medical appointments
- A clear person to speak to for check-ins and support

Adjustments don't have to be expensive – speak to your colleagues and find out what adjustment they feel would enable them to do their job.

Discussing Absences

Some of the things we can do as employers to ease a transition back into work from illness include Mind's Wellness Action Plans. The CIPD also have the IGLOO framework designed to support employees returning to work after a period of ill health, exploring the barriers and resources people face. IGLOO is an acronym for Individual, Group, Leader/Manager, Organisation and Outside.

If absence gets to the stage where it has a really negative impact on the job, it's important for employers to have evidence to start managing that and maybe talking to the person about adjustments that might need to be made to the role. These could be things such as going part-time or a step down into a less demanding role for it to work from the perspective of both parties.

We also recommend mapping out absences. This can be as simple as getting a diary/one year to a page calendar and colouring in the days when somebody's been absent from work, or whatever other format used to record the information. Sometimes a visual cue is the best way to display how frequent absences have been, or the impact that it's having on the organisation. It can be very illustrative to an individual who only remembers their previous absence but not how it's built up over a long period of time.

If challenged later on in court, it's also useful for judges to have that paperwork because it immediately gives somebody a feel for how long someone has been off for. A percentage of working time can also help show patterns or impact on the business.

Something employers should keep in mind when discussing absences related to health conditions is to be communicative at every step. Some people shy away from speaking face-to-face with employees and resort instead to using text messages or other online communication software. Being able to make eye contact with those who are comfortable making eye contact and reading somebody's body language can help you identify issues and might help people be more open to speaking about their troubles. Let's not get in bad habits of just emailing everybody and forget the importance of speaking.

Questions from the Audience

Q. Will the government put more money into getting disabled people and people with long-term conditions into work?

A. Currently we are unaware of any plans from the government that would support this, such as occupational heath advice and support, or tax breaks.
Some things that are already in action include the Access to Work Scheme through the Department of Work and Pensions. The Access to Work Scheme helps people get or stay in work if they have a physical or mental health condition or disability. Businesses can get support through that scheme, so we would encourage all employers to always go there and see what support they can get. This includes funding communication support workers, or paying for taxis for people to be able to travel to their workplace.

Q. Can we reasonably be reasonably expect candidates to work in an office / at home / blended working with government changing its policy?

A. Pre-pandemic, there was an increasing number of cases where individuals requested work from home as a reasonable adjustment and were refused. For businesses to survive the pandemic, work from home became a necessity and the logistics of how to make it happen were made clear. Some individuals prefer to work in an office, some don't, so it needs to be looked at a case-by-case basis as less of what the government is recommending and more about being inclusive.
Currently, the evidence base for employers to say no is harder. Before, it was up to an employee to prove why it could work, but currently it's about proving why it can't. Why does this particular role have to be done in an office? Employers have to make a decision based on the particular job and evidence that it needs an in-person presence. A flat no is no longer good enough.

Q. How can we test literacy and numeracy skills in neurodivergent and dyslexic people?

A. We want to make sure that the tests that we use are reflective of the job that somebody's going to be doing. There's no point testing somebody's literacy or numeracy if it doesn't have any relationship with the actual job. As an example, if somebody is going to be entering numbers into a till in a supermarket, but the till is going to be doing the work for that person, why don't we just test that? We don't need to be testing their ability to add up without any support or device there to help them do it.

There was a case a few years ago against the government legal department regarding the tests they had set as part of the recruitment process for lawyers. Criticism of the court came about because that they hadn't adjusted the particular test that they were using to take into account those people who were dyslexic. It's important to ask the candidate what adjustment they would like as part of the process and why they think it would help level the playing field for them. Rather than a blanket no, you should find out what it is that they want. Typically, it might be just longer to do the test or the ability to print something on a different colour. Not all reasonable adjustments have to be expensive.

Q. Are there any adjustments in particular that we should be considering with long COVID cases?

A. It's very difficult without speaking to the individual about how their particular COVID is affecting them to make a guess at a reasonable adjustment, so it would need to be on a case-by-case basis. An employer can't make adjustments without understanding the barrier, and assuming may lead to embarrassment when if they get it wrong. It's not an easy answer, because everybody is different. The focus should be on understanding the barriers to having those conversations with people before you move on to making adjustments. Be wary not to ask people for proof before you make adjustments because you could get into a lot of trouble by asking for that proof.

Q. How can we make people comfortable talking about disability?

A. Fear of getting it wrong that often drives people to shy away from a conversation. Encouraging people to talk about their disability can help drive conversation about their needs and how we can make things more accessible. By giving people permission to talk about disability, we can open the dialogue and dispel myths and stereotypes. Be sure to keep in mind how we talk about disability and use the Social Model – but people from different countries and different generations and different

cultures can all have different language that they use. If you get it wrong, don't panic, because if you get it wrong you learn from it. It's better to get it wrong and learn from it than to avoid the situation altogether. There are some situations which you shouldn't ask about disability at all.

If you have an inclusive place to work by being part of a Disability Confident Scheme, that can encourage people to open up and reassure both disabled and non-disabled staff, managers and recruitment teams because of clear policies and guidance.

Q. Although we offer reasonable adjustments for the interview process from the outset, we still see a lot of applicants with a disability withdrawing from interviews. Is there anything else we can do to remove any barriers?

There are four things to try and remember. The first thing to be aware of is that adjustments might be needed at every stage, not just an interview and that might be why they're withdrawing. Mention at every stage that you can make adjustments or changes. Put this in every document, job description, job advert, application form, vacancy and website.

Second: feedback works both ways, so in addition to providing feedback you can also request it, which is a good way to identify what barriers there might be in the recruitment process to identify what you might have done wrong what you can maybe improve.

Think about further tailored training for recruitment teams, which can be provided by organisations such as Leonard Cheshire. This training can be on how to have conversations with disabled employees., how to make adjustments, inclusive language and how people identify. Leonard Cheshire's training for recruitment teams looks at every stage of the recruitment process, how you can make application forms accessible, how to make assessments accessible, how you can improve job descriptions, how to attract disabled talent, and how to interview inclusively.

Fourth, consider joining the Disability Confident Scheme, which is free and can provide great advice and resources. If you're part of the Disability Confident Scheme, shout about it. Make sure that in every document that you have, every document that they see, because that can provide reassurance to applicants and any existing staff.

Q. What language should be used in adverts to encourage applicants with accessibility issues, diverse backgrounds and neurodivergent?

There's lots of things to consider in job adverts. There's always things to avoid, like don't ask for a driving license if they can get there by public transport. Don't say things like "need to be fit, strong and healthy", "need to be young and enthusiastic, full of energy". These are all kind of things that can imply that you need to be healthy and non-disabled so there's an obvious thing to try and avoid.

Also try to avoid saying things like "we treat everybody equally", because sometimes you have to treat people differently to get equality. Treating everyone the exact same might put someone at a disadvantage when their needs haven't been listened to. As long as the language is positive and encouraging. If you are part of the Disability Confident Scheme and mention it as such on the applications and job descriptions, that can attract disabled talent.

Remember the real barrier is not the disability, it's the environment, negative attitudes, and ways of working that apply to everybody that actually put other person at a disadvantage. So use language that is basically reflecting what the real barrier is.

Q. Please can you have a refresher on the benefits of attracting and recruiting a diverse workforce to share with hiring managers

Diversity is good for business and there's a large pool of disabled talent that isn't being reached. If we don't value diversity, we miss out on great talent. But we can also lose talent already working for us because they might not want to work somewhere that's not inclusive. Potential customers could go elsewhere and remember, disabled people spend money too. We all work in different ways whether we're disabled or not. It's also likely that managers may already have a disabled person working for them, whether it's visible or non-visible. Disability is very broad. When hiring, the focus should be on good team-working, and it's the outcomes that matter.

We all work in different ways whether we're disabled or not. Sometimes you have to treat people differently to get equality. If we value diversity whether disability or another protected characteristic, we'll benefit then from a wide range of ideas and perspectives. We can retain existing disabled staff if they feel welcome and valued.

Q. Are there any good websites that we can direct hiring managers to?

The Disability Confident Scheme is a great scheme employers can sign up to, free of charge and full of helpful guidance and information. There is also the Valuable 500, a list of 500 CEOs around the world committed to disability inclusion. This can give you great links to other organisations and good connections.

Evenbreak is a recruitment agency specifically dedicated to disabled candidates, and Leonard Cheshire is a great company that can help create bespoke training.

Further Information & useful links:

Mind's Work Related Action Plans

Leonard Cheshire

Disability Confident Scheme

Valuable 500

Evenbreak

Working With Long COVID

Facts and Figures around Disability

The Social Model of Disability

COVID-19 Return to Work Guide

IGLOO Framework

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