



Leading from the front

Disability and the role of the Board

In association with:



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Welcome

I am really pleased that KPMG has been able to work with Purple and their CEO Mike Adams to produce *Leading from the front Disability and the role of the Board*.

I was first introduced to Mike back at the launch of the Government's Disability Confident Scheme in November 2016, where Purple and KPMG were both recognised as 1 of 13 Disability Confident Leaders. Given Purple's expertise in the subject of disability and KPMG's influence across a vast range of business areas and sectors, it seemed like a great opportunity to produce this review and amplify the discussion that we should all be having on this vital issue.

I am the senior sponsor for Disability and Mental Health at KPMG – and have been championing this agenda for a number of years. Something I have observed over this time is that there is still a real lack of visibility and representation of both disability and mental health at board level. With 1 in 5 of the UK population having some form of disability or long-term health condition, it is important that we are representing that consumer base at senior leadership levels.

Everyone has their own story or perspective on how disability and mental health issues are present in their lives. Personally, having hearing loss on one side has made me acutely aware not only of the challenges a disability or health issue may present, but also of the additional skills and capabilities that can be developed in response to these challenges.

We want KPMG to be a magnet for talent. That means accessing the widest possible talent pool, which we will only achieve if we treat inclusion and diversity as a board management issue. Late last year, I set up a Disability Steering Group that looks at disability and mental health holistically, with heads of all of the key parts of the business represented and reporting to me.

There is still a long way for all of us to go. I hope *Leading from the front* provides a good springboard from which to start or continue your own journey in this area.



Tony Cates

KPMG UK Vice Chair and partner sponsor

Contents

Foreword	03
Introduction	04
Executive summary	05
Setting the scene	06
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The research gap• Global trends• The case for change• The purple opportunity: changing attitudes and changing cultures	
Disability and your customers	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumer spending power and the purple pound• Getting it right from the start - accessibility and inclusive design	
Disability and your employees	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversify your workforce• Senior leadership representation	
Disability and your stakeholders	32
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Government view - promoting Disability Confident organisations• Diversity, corporate governance, and your investors• The supply chain effect	
Taking the next step: best practice for boards	40
Conclusion: a better future for disability	42
About the authors	43
Thank you to our contributors	44



Foreword

The words ‘diversity and inclusion’ are often associated with corporate social responsibility. But creating a business environment that is accessible to everyone and truly embraces the differences that make us all unique is about more than simply doing the right thing.

The value of board members is to look at issues from a different, impartial perspective and scrutinise performance dispassionately. An objective look at the available evidence tells us that promoting inclusion is not an optional activity; it makes great business sense.

Around one in five of adults have a disability of some kind. The questions businesses need to be asking themselves therefore are: can you afford to miss out on the custom of over 13 million people in the UK who - together with their families - have an estimated spending power of around £250 billion? Are you confident that you are attracting the very best people to work for you, and are you maximising the talent of your colleagues once they join you?

Making the difference

At Sainsbury’s, we want to be the most inclusive retailer, where every single one of our colleagues can fulfil their potential and customers feel welcome when they shop with us. In October last year, we were proud to become the largest retailer so far to achieve the status of Disability Confident Leader. This accreditation – the highest awarded through the Government’s Disability Confident Programme – reflects the success of initiatives such as our “You Can” programme which, since its

creation in 2008, has helped us to recruit over 26,000 people who may have otherwise faced barriers to employment.

Through the great work of our Company Secretary, Tim Fallowfield, who currently serves as Chair of the government’s Disability Confident Business Leaders Group, we are supporting and encouraging the wider business community to employ and accommodate more disabled people.

However, we cannot do it alone. This is why this review from KPMG and Purple is an important contribution to the open conversations we must continue to have at board level and beyond, if we are to effect meaningful change.

I hope that the insights that follow will be a valuable source both of information and also inspiration for your own Disability Confident journey.



David Tyler

Chairman, Sainsbury’s

Introduction

Little by little, the conversation around disability is changing. Both KPMG and Purple are proud to be working with a wide range of people in business, politics, and the broader community who share our belief that creating a more inclusive society is both the right thing to do - and a commercial imperative.

What we realised is that while there is plenty of great advice already available around the day-to-day, practical things that can make life easier for disabled customers or colleagues, not much is targeted at the senior leaders responsible for setting the strategy and changing cultures. This realisation led to *Leading from the Front*, a review of current research and best practice in the field of disability. The review is informed by our collective experience as well as that of other leading organisations which are setting new standards for inclusivity. It has been written with a board level audience in mind to reflect the importance of senior leadership in setting both strategic direction and the public agenda.

Unique challenges

It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to becoming a disability inclusive organisation – far from it. Every organisation will have its own unique challenges and there is no ‘silver bullet’. The aim here is to provide provoke further discussion and – above all – **action**.

We start by reviewing the existing evidence base both here and abroad and putting forward the case for change. We then look at the issue of disability in business as it affects consumers, employees and other stakeholders. Finally, we outline some practical next steps and consider what the future might look like for disability inclusion.

We would like to thank everyone who made this review possible, especially our expert contributors. It’s been fascinating to learn about all the brilliant work already going on in this area.

We hope you feel the same way. If you do, ask yourself what you can do today to help your organisation embrace the purple opportunity that lies ahead.

We look forward to building a more inclusive future with you.



David Gracie

Director, Legal Services
KPMG in the UK



Mike Adams OBE

Chief Executive
Purple

Executive summary

Put simply, disability is board business. It affects every single aspect of your organisation. In fact, it affects approximately 1 billion people worldwide; 15% of the total population. Despite this, there has been a historical lack of reliable data to help us understand its prevalence in, and impact on, business and society.

Faced with talent shortages and the socioeconomic costs of an ageing population, more governments and public and private sector interests are re-evaluating the contribution disabled people can make. The evidence available suggests that many of us have been guilty of underestimating the size of the opportunity. The case for building disability-inclusive organisations is compelling from a number of different viewpoints. Customers are more likely to buy from companies that reflect their own values. Brands that welcome disabled customers by providing the assistance and facilities they need and that emphasise inclusivity in their branding and advertising can win new, loyal customers. The global 'Purple Dollar' – the collective spending power of disabled customers and their families – is estimated to be in the region of \$8 trillion. However, less than ten per cent of businesses have a defined strategy for targeting this market.

Feeling the benefits

There is a strong correlation between greater diversity and financial outperformance. Becoming a disability-confident employer opens your organisation up to a wider talent pool, different ways of doing things and a far broader customer base. At a time when skilled labour is in short supply, there are an estimated 1 million disabled people available and looking for work in the UK. With the right support, disabled workers can be just as productive as their non-disabled colleagues as well as more loyal to their employer.

Key stakeholders are taking a stronger interest in diversity – and disability in particular. The UK Government has set a goal of getting 1 million more disabled people into work in the next 10 years. The Financial Reporting Council has consulted on proposed changes to its corporate governance code that will make boards more accountable for corporate culture, including diversity and stakeholder engagement. And we are seeing a stronger emphasis on sustainable and socially responsible investing, led by some of the world's largest institutional investors.

In short, the conversation around disability is changing. Forward-thinking leaders and organisations are already building a more inclusive and prosperous future in which the potential of disabled people can be fully realised. The window of opportunity is currently wide open and boards can play a pivotal role in helping the organisations they represent to take advantage. Get started by:

- 1. Tabling disability as an agenda item for a minimum of one board meeting each year.**
- 2. Appointing a board-level champion who is accountable for disability issues within your organisation.**
- 3. Signing up to the Government's Disability Confident scheme to demonstrate your commitment to becoming an inclusive employer and brand.**
- 4. Becoming an advocate and promoting disability issues to your suppliers, extended networks and external audiences.**
- 5. Considering external partnerships with campaigns and bodies that specialise in disability issues to boost your understanding and accelerate your change programmes.**

The research gap

In today's data-driven business environment, the phrase "what gets measured gets managed" is now so commonplace it's becoming a cliché. But if we needed any further evidence that Peter Drucker – the supposed originator of this management proverb – was on to something, it's right there in the lack of reliable quantitative data on disability in the workplace.

Of the research that has been conducted to understand the links between diversity and inclusion and organisational performance, the majority provides metrics and/or reporting on gender, race and sexual orientation, but not disability. The same is true of studies of diversity at the senior leadership level. For example, statistics on the number of women on FTSE 100 company boards is easily available through a simple internet search, while mandatory pay gap reporting is coming into force. However, there isn't as yet a similarly reliable set of metrics for disability representation at the board level.

One reason for this research gap is that disability is inherently more difficult to measure. 4 in 5 disabled people have a 'hidden impairment' (such as autism), meaning that their disability might not be obvious based on their physical appearance. Producing accurate data on disability in the workplace also relies on self-disclosure, which can be a sensitive issue.

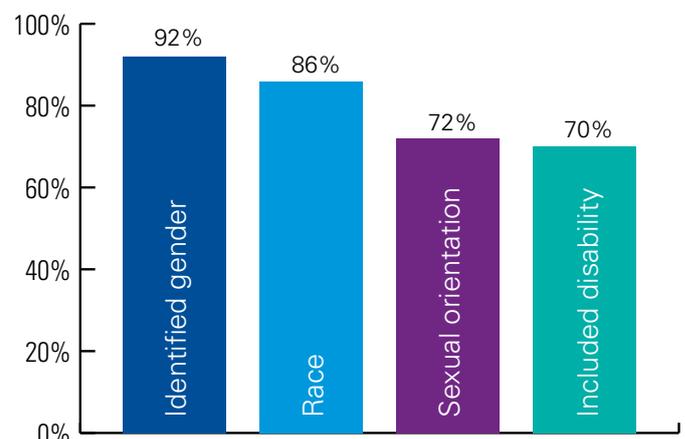
There is also evidence to suggest that lack of awareness is another contributing factor. Russell Reynolds Associates surveyed over 2000 male and female executives around the world to understand how they and their companies think about diversity and inclusion.

When asked "which of the following are likely included in your organisation's definitions of 'diversity' and 'inclusion'?" 92% identified gender, 86% race, 72% sexual orientation and 70% included disability as a category.

In the public sphere, disability is often the forgotten party in the diversity debate. There are over 6 million working aged-disabled people in the UK, and 83% of people acquire their disability during their working life. We need better benchmarking if we are to successfully meet the needs of this significant talent pool and consumer market.

The more we talk openly about disability in the workplace through the media and in wider society, the easier it will be to build an accurate understanding of the progress that has been made and what still needs to be addressed. One of the aims of this review is to stimulate this discussion in the boardroom and beyond.

Which of the following are likely included in your organisation's definitions of 'diversity' and 'inclusion'?





Creating a sharing culture at Channel 4

“We see the number of people sharing their disability status as a cultural indicator, not just a measure of success,” explains Graeme Whippy, Disability Specialist at Channel 4. “When I joined Channel 4 in 2016, the proportion of people that disclosed their disability was 3%. I was clear that this would not be changed through recruitment alone.” This led to Channel 4’s Disability 2020 strategy and a series of campaigns (*covered in The purple opportunity: changing attitudes and changing cultures later on*) aimed at encouraging colleagues to update their HR record to indicate if they are disabled. The result was an almost four-fold increase in the disclosure rate to 11.5%.



Global trends

It sounds obvious but it bears repeating – the UK is not alone in needing to become more inclusive. This is a truly a global issue. There are over 1 billion people with disabilities around the world. Unfortunately, they are more likely to have poorer health outcomes, fewer formal qualifications, lower economic participation, and experience higher rates of poverty.

This is in part because people with disabilities still encounter barriers in accessing those services such as health, education,

employment and transport that people without disabilities take for granted. Whether directly or indirectly, government policy can deliver meaningful change in all of these areas and many more.

As the Center for Talent Innovation’s recent Disabilities and Inclusion report shows, though many countries have some form of anti-discrimination legislation, the additional policy mechanisms they are using can be quite varied. Take, for example, the legal requirements for employers:

Country	Legal Requirements for Employers
Brazil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet a quota of registered disabled employees (ranging from 2-5% depending on company size). Provision of training for people with disabilities who lack prior job experience.
Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet a 5% quota for those with severe disabilities. Ensure employees with severe disabilities have the right to elect ombudspersons to advocate for them.
India 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is illegal to terminate the contract of someone who becomes disabled during their period of employment. Companies of 20 people or more must appoint a ‘Liaison Officer’ to oversee the recruitment of, and provisions for, people with disabilities.
Japan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment quota of 1.8%. Must provide ‘reasonable accommodations’ to remove social barriers for people with disabilities.
UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must provide ‘reasonable adjustments’ during recruitment and employment, including (but not limited to) physical accessibility changes, and providing alternate places to work and specialist equipment.

“More than half of the world’s population now lives in urban areas, and by 2050 the UN expects that number to rise to two thirds – including approximately 940 million disabled people.”

Around the world cities are striving to be fully inclusive and barrier free. While the reality doesn’t always live up to the ambition, there are still many encouraging signs. In Seattle, the University of Washington’s Taskar Center for Accessible Technology has created a map-based app which allows users to find accessible routes around town. Singapore’s Building Construction Authority encourages developers to follow its set of universal design principles (e.g. lower counter tops and column-free spaces) when planning new buildings. Dubai has set out its commitment to becoming disability-friendly by 2020 with a comprehensive strategy “which takes into consideration every aspect of life in the city.”

We have already established that, in most cases, we still don’t know the full picture when it comes to disability employment. This is another area where international efforts are ongoing to achieve a more accurate measure of the progress being made in the workplace. In the UK the Business Disability Forum (BDF) developed the ‘Disability Standard’ benchmarking tool in 2004. Since then this standard has provided the framework for the Australian Network on Disability’s Access and Inclusion Index, and the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Labor’s ‘Mowaamah’ certification system.



However, the public and third sectors can only do so much. If companies wake up to the fact that there is an opportunity here to access a market and talent pool equivalent to the population of China then they can also help disabled people to thrive in all areas of their lives. This starts with ensuring equal access to the products and services they need, but it also means employing more disabled people.

A win-win approach

Examples of companies that are not just accommodating disabled workers, but thriving with them on board, are now gaining international attention. Disabled people account for 60% of Indian outsourcing firm Vindhya E-Infomedia's 1300 employees. After initial success in Germany, IT consulting and compliance firm Auticon, which only employs consultants who are on the autistic spectrum (see Diversifying your workforce), now has a busy London office and is looking to expand to other UK cities.

Just as in any other area of business, there is plenty we can learn by looking outside of our own borders. Many of the examples given in this section can easily be replicated internationally with relative ease. By seeking out best practice from around the world, companies will benefit not only from implementing new ideas they but also from discovering possible new commercial opportunities along the way too.

Cerealto



Cerealto is a global private label food manufacturer with factories in five countries, including a factory in Worksop, Nottinghamshire. Affiliated company Grupo Siro, a leader in the Spanish food industry, is the largest private employer of disabled people in Spain. The company has 500 employees with disabilities, accounting for 16% of the workforce and has been recognised by the United Nations for its labour inclusion policies. These include accessible production lines and a talent programme to promote the integration of disabled workers into the labour market.

This philosophy is also a central part of Cerealto's identity and purpose. "We don't see it as a charitable thing to do, it makes absolute sense from a business perspective," explains Michael Harfleet, Chairman of Cerealto UK. "One of the more interesting positive impacts of hiring disabled people – and one from which other employers can learn - is seeing the 'halo effect' it creates across the organisation. Other employees are inspired and motivated to work for a company that demonstrably cares about the disadvantaged groups in our societies. It's a virtuous circle."

"In Spain there are tax benefits for employing workers from disadvantaged backgrounds. But even if there were no such incentives it's still something we would continue to do and recommend to others."

The case for change

Although the research base is not comprehensive, there is strong evidence to support the commercial case for becoming disability inclusive. Here we summarise some of the most compelling statistics, many of which we will examine in more detail in later chapters.

Consumer spending and attitudes

The Purple Pound	The 'Purple Pound' refers to the collective spending power of disabled people and their families. In the UK the total value of the 'purple pound' is estimated to be £249 billion. The specialised equipment market alone is thought to be worth over £720 million a year. Some estimates put the global purple pound at \$8 trillion.
The walkaway pound	Three quarters of disabled people have left a shop or business because of poor disability awareness or understanding. The value of the revenue lost as a result – the 'walkaway pound' is £420 million a week.
The click away pound	Inaccessible websites and apps accounted for £11.75 billion in lost revenue in 2016 in the UK alone.
Customer perceptions	In one academic study, 92% of the 803 consumers surveyed said they felt favourably towards companies that employed people with disabilities.

Employment

Untapped talent	The disability employment gap in the UK is currently above 30 percentage points. According to ONS figures for the first quarter of 2017, one million disabled people in the UK were capable of and actively seeking work but were unable to find a job.
Economic potential	The Social Market Foundation calculated that raising employment rates for disabled people up to the national average would boost the UK economy by £13 billion.
Longevity, productivity and attendance	Evidence from a number of different studies suggests higher loyalty shown by disabled employees toward their employer, equivalent productivity and lower absence records compared to their peers.
Acquired disabilities	Just 17% of people born with a disability were born with it. This means that the vast majority acquire them at a later point in their lives - and that many will do so while in work. With an ageing population and the age of retirement increasing, this is likely to become even more common. Businesses that don't address this trend risk losing valuable skills and knowledge from their workforces.

The purple opportunity: changing attitudes and changing cultures



In the past, conversations around disability have predominantly focused on what disabled people as a group are unable to do. Public perceptions of disabled people were studied in detail in the 2009 British Social Attitudes survey. Over a third (36%) of respondents thought of disabled people as less productive than non-disabled people. More than three quarters (76%) thought of disabled people as 'needing to be cared for.'

Another common, but potentially unhelpful, misconception is the tendency to associate the word 'disabled' with physical mobility. Part of the blame lies with the choice of the wheelchair as the international symbol of disability. If people aren't aware of the fact that 80% of impairments are hidden, they are clearly not going to consider their specific needs, addressing only the impairments they already see and know.

One of the reasons for the lower disclosure rate amongst disabled people in the workplace, compared to other identifiers, is the fear of how their employer will respond. Almost half of the disabled people surveyed by the charity Scope said they have been worried about making employers aware of their impairment or condition. Many were not even fully aware of their legal rights as employees.

This is why a change in attitude is so important. A company can only help an employee if they are made aware of their specific needs. So the first step in helping colleagues is establishing an inclusive culture in which they feel comfortable opening up about their condition without fear of reproach or discrimination. The business community can and should take a leading role in shifting mindsets.

Businesses of all sizes can start by looking at how best to facilitate open conversations about disability at work. The Government’s Disability Confident scheme (see The Government view –*promoting Disability Confident organisations*) not only gives you access to a wealth of practical advice; the act of joining is, in itself, a way of showing your employees that you are considering everyone’s needs.

But large businesses in particular can exert significant influence that extends far beyond their own workforces and immediate supply chains. It’s encouraging to see more brands highlighting disability issues in the media (such as Virgin Media and Scope’s #WorkWithMe campaign covered later in this review), or using their marketing and advertising to champion inclusivity. We will return to one example - Mars’ award-winning Maltesers campaign - later on.

Channel 4 has exemplified this approach not just in its commitment to diversity in its programming (which includes the last two Paralympic games and The Undateables) but also in its creative work. Produced by Channel 4’s in-house agency, 4Creative, the Superhumans campaign to promote their Paralympics coverage was conceived by Creative Director

John Allison. *Superhumans* has won multiple industry awards, including two gold lions at the prestigious Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity. The fact that John has ADHD is a poignant reminder of how, when allowed to thrive diversity – in this case, neurodiversity – can add immense value to an organisation. The campaign also played a key role in an internal initiative which delivered the four-fold increase in self-disclosure as part of the Channel 4 Year of Disability in 2016 (see Shifting perceptions at Channel 4: The Year of Disability).

Not every company, of course, has access to Channel 4’s resources or creative minds. But the digital tools and media available today do make it easier for organisations to develop their own change campaigns in order to get their teams talking about disability. Without awareness there can be no action – in *Diversifying your workforce* we will look at the steps employers can take to recruit and retain more disabled staff.

From	To
Benevolent prejudice (“I’ll do it for you”)	Honest conversations without fear, based on a shared understanding of the issues (“Can I help you with that?”)
Apprehension about taking on disabled staff	Disabled people are a unique and valuable source of talent. Diversity generates innovation
Charities and the public sector are solving disability issues	Everyone has a role to play in reducing disability inequality
Disabled people are predominantly dependent on others	Disabled people have choice and control over their support
Being accessible is about having wheelchair ramps and lifts	Being accessible is about making the reasonable adjustments to accommodate a wide range of disabilities, both visible and hidden
How can we make sure we comply with the equalities act?	How can we make inclusivity an integral part of everything we do?
Disability will always be a problem	How can innovation empower disabled people to fully realise their value?



Shifting perceptions at Channel 4: The Year of Disability

Graeme Whippy, Channel 4's Disability Specialist, believes that successful cultural change starts with "having conversations and overcoming awkwardness". Channel 4's coverage of the 2016 Paralympic games in Rio – formed just one part of its *Year of Disability* commitments to increase representation of disabled people within the broadcasting industry - and felt like a natural way to stimulate internal discussion about disability.

The channel started by changing the language used to talk about disability - 'sharing' became preferred to 'disclosure', and 'diversity' became 'difference'. "The aim was to reframe the conversation to make it non-threatening for our people who are different, and to bring sceptics along with us," Whippy explains.

The 'Tell Us' internal communications campaign was then launched and promoted by senior leadership with the specific aim of encouraging staff to share their disability status with their manager.

This message was reinforced by an all-staff meeting, with an emphasis on explaining why this was important for them, the organisation and on the role that difference and inclusion play in Channel 4's commercial strategy. A director spoke openly about his own experience with mental health and ADHD. "It made disability more visible," adds Whippy. "You need to send a clear message that it's OK to talk about it, that we're serious about it, and there's real business sense behind it."

The ultimate result of culture shift at Channel 4 was a four-fold increase in the disability disclosure rate.

Consumer spending power and the purple pound

Our most common interactions with many companies are when we are discovering and buying their products. The quality of these interactions will determine whether consumers make a first purchase, and if they will consider doing so again. The unsurprising result is that brands invest billions of pounds each year in every aspect of the customer journey, from marketing to in-store experience.

What is more surprising is that less than 10% of businesses have a defined strategy for targeting disabled consumers when we consider that:

- Around 20% of the UK population have a disability
- More than half of UK households in the UK have a connection to someone with a disability
- The collective spending of these households (the 'Purple Pound') is estimated to be worth £249 billion to the UK economy

This means that over 90% of businesses are ignoring millions of potential customers in the UK and even more internationally. The estimated 1.3 billion disabled people in the world represent an addressable market the size

of China. If we include their friends and families we can add a further 2.4 billion potential consumers with an emotional connection to disability. Therefore the global Purple Pound may constitute over \$8 trillion in annual disposable income.

The 'Purple Pound' also represents a growing market segment. In the UK the prevalence of disability is increasing as the population grows older. As a result, the value of the 'Purple Pound' jumped from £212 billion in the 2012-13 financial year to £249 billion in 2014-15. Allowing for inflation, that is an increase of 14%.

Unfortunately, the facts don't just point to a potentially lucrative growth market. They also highlight the current chasm in theory and reality. Work carried out by the Extra Costs Commission found that three in four disabled people and their families have walked away from a UK business due to lack of awareness and understanding of disabled consumers. The Commission calculated that businesses are losing approximately £2 billion a month (the 'Walkaway Pound') by ignoring the needs of disabled people.



So what exactly is going wrong? As we have already established, disabled people have diverse needs depending on the nature of their impairment. However, some common themes quickly emerge:

1. Lack of disability awareness

The most common reason for disabled consumers and their families not choosing a business is poor customer service due to lack of awareness, poor communication and lack of flexibility. This is particularly important for the 4 in 5 disabled people who have a hidden impairment as it isn't always obvious that they might need additional assistance.

In the vast majority of cases there is no malicious intent on the part of the sales assistant. It's often the opposite – they fail to engage, and therefore adequately assist disabled customers, out of fear of causing (unintentional) embarrassment or offence.

Disabled people are no different to other customers in valuing good customer service – it's the most influential factor in deciding whether they will buy from you again. In the Extra Costs Commission's survey, the top three reasons given for repeating custom were 1) friendly and helpful staff (71%); 2) good accessibility (55%); and 3) value for money (53%).

2. Poor accessibility

Even top-notch customer service cannot always compensate for accessibility shortcomings. Some of the main issues are clearly visible – lack of disabled parking spaces, ramps, accessible toilets and changing facilities, and poor store design. At best these deficiencies make the buying experience more inconvenient, at worst they make it impossible.

The high street is a bell weather for accessibility. Of the 1,295 fashion retailers visited by DisabledGo last year:

- 23% did not have access for wheelchair users
- Only 38% gave staff disability awareness training
- Only 10% had a hearing loop available for shoppers with hearing aids

Others aren't so obvious. One of the most neglected areas, but an increasingly important one, is e-accessibility. Nearly three quarters of disabled online consumers (71%) will click away from websites that they find difficult to use due to the effect of their disability.

The 'Click Away Pound' survey found that 93% of disabled users who came across a website with access barriers did not bother to contact the available helpline. All respondents said they typically found a different site they could use and 82% said they would spend more if websites were more accessible. The estimated 4.3 million UK online shoppers impacted are thought to have a combined spending power of £11.75 billion, almost 10% of the projected total UK online spend in 2016.

3. Lack of information

The Extra Costs Commission also found that 49% of disabled people feel they only have some of the information they need or want when buying things online or in-store. Research by RICA also suggests that one of the areas that businesses should improve is the quality and accessibility of the information they provide on their products and services. Disabled people reported that they often look to community groups and peer networks for this rather than the businesses themselves. This view was also supported in the Trailblazer High Street report, with 70% of young disabled people saying they felt there is currently inadequate information about accessibility on businesses' websites and Facebook pages.

4. The 'disability deficit' in branding and advertising

As in other areas, there is a tendency for disability to be the forgotten side of diversity in advertising. Last Christmas a number of leading brands, including John Lewis and Tesco, made inclusivity a core theme of their seasonal campaigns by featuring multi-ethnic, multi-faith and 'non-traditional' families. Yet disabled people remained underrepresented, to the extent that two thirds of those with physical disabilities say they believe society tries to "sweep them under the rug"

The digital age has made the industry more fragmented, but nonetheless the biggest marketing campaigns have the power to shift perceptions. This can create a powerful 'halo' effect for brands that make a public commitment to inclusivity. The majority of disabled adults state that how a business treats them affects the choices their families and friends make.

Taking action: The Help Me Spend My Money campaign

Last year Purple launched the Help Me Spend My Money campaign with initial backing and support from launch partner Intu (a leading shopping centre owner-operator), Marks & Spencer, The Institute of Directors and the Minister for Disabled People. The campaign promotes awareness of the importance and value of the Purple Pound.

The Help Me Spend My Money Charter for Change serves as a helpful starting point for companies looking to improve the experience they provide to their disabled customers. It asks signatories to commit to:

- 1) Making Disability Awareness training available to in-store staff**
- 2) Having a website that meets Purple's accessibility guidance**
- 3) Providing key customer information in large print, braille, and easy read formats**
- 4) Signing up to the Government's Disability Confident scheme**
- 5) Taking steps to promote their disability confident status**

Businesses taking action

Quiet hours



The UK's first nationwide quiet shopping hour took place in October 2017. Intu partnered with the National Autistic Society to hold an autism-friendly 'quiet hour' across its 14 centres. Restaurants and shops across its centres dimmed their lighting and turned their music down. Retailers including ASDA, Tesco and Sainsbury's have also previously piloted autism-friendly shopping hours in their stores.

Maltesers' disability campaign



Michele Oliver, VP of marketing at Mars UK, recently revealed that Maltesers' series of video ads starring disabled cast members was their most successful campaign in 80 years. The TV spots produced an 8.1% uplift in sales, double the target of 4%.

Wheelchair friendly trollies for parents at Sainsbury's



The supermarket chain worked with their trolley manufacturer Wanzl to make a disability-friendly trolley for customers in wheelchairs with young children. This development followed a tweet from mother of three Elizabeth Gwilliam showing how she had to put her five month year old son in a separate trolley that someone else would have to push. The new wheelchair trolley has an additional mount for the baby seat.

These are just a few examples of how customer-facing businesses are listening to feedback and innovating so that disabled consumers receive the same level of service as everyone else. As the Maltesers experience shows, this isn't just about doing the right thing, it can win you new, loyal customers in a fiercely competitive market.

Finally, in addition to great initiatives like the ones mentioned in this section, another way consumer businesses can demonstrate their commitment to inclusion is by hiring more disabled people. There are many benefits to reflecting the diversity





Arsenal for everyone

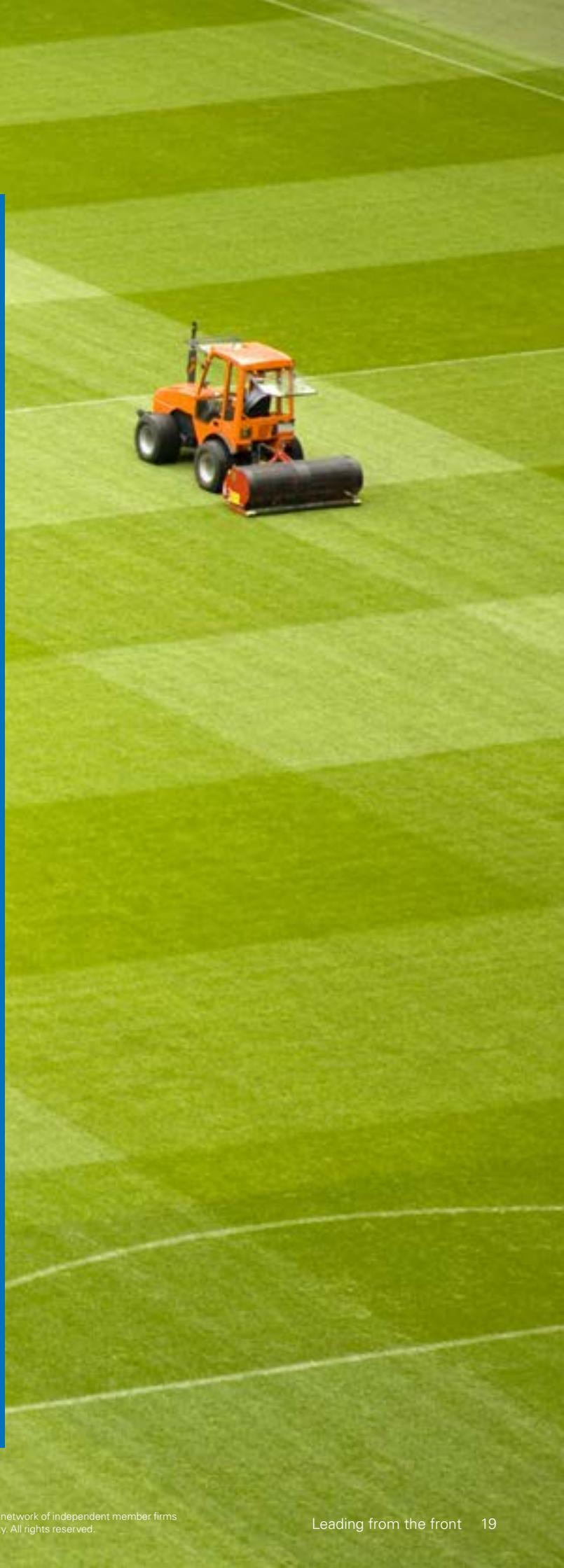
Arsenal recently became the first professional football club to achieve 'Disability Confident Leader' status. The club's long-term commitment to disability is a key part of its "Arsenal for Everyone" initiative to promote diversity and inclusion.

This commitment is clear to anyone who visits the Emirates Stadium. Last summer the club introduced a sensory room for fans with autism-related conditions. It allows them to watch the game from a quieter environment, and if they need a break at any point there is a separate calm space with low lighting. Other accessibility features include a toilet for guide dogs and a disabled fans' lounge, where people can wait in the warm and dry before a match.

The Arsenal in the Community team supports a range of disability football clubs and runs football sessions for young people with Down's Syndrome, those over 14 who are visually impaired or blind, those without limbs, and Deaf people who are under 18.

"It's an important part of the club and something everyone is proud of," explains Equality Advisor Agnes Fletcher. "It starts from the very top – Ivan Gazidis (Chief Executive) and his management team take the lead on diversity issues. Because Arsenal for Everyone is promoted at every level of the organisation, it provides a conceptual framework to help staff understand the importance of disability issues."

"Being open about these issues also benefits Arsenal's employer brand and status as an inclusive place to work. The latest equality and diversity survey showed that more employees and casual staff are identifying themselves as disabled. So being disability inclusive doesn't just open up Arsenal to a bigger fanbase but a wider talent pool too."



Getting it right from the start - accessibility and inclusive design

There is little point marketing or selling to disabled customers if they cannot get value from your products or services. As we have seen with the 'Clickaway Pound', any comprehensive approach to becoming more inclusive must also accommodate accessible product and service design.

Adopting accessible design principles as the norm will not only open up your company

to a far wider market; creating products and services that are accessible from the outset is also far more cost efficient. And having to 'retro-fit' accessible features often leads to a suboptimal user experience, as many wheelchair users will testify.

Common areas which require greater input at the design phase, in order to meet the needs of different types of users, include:



Visual

Partial sight, blindness, colour blindness



Mobility

Physical disabilities that impact on how people interact with their surroundings



Auditory

Issues with hearing, including deafness



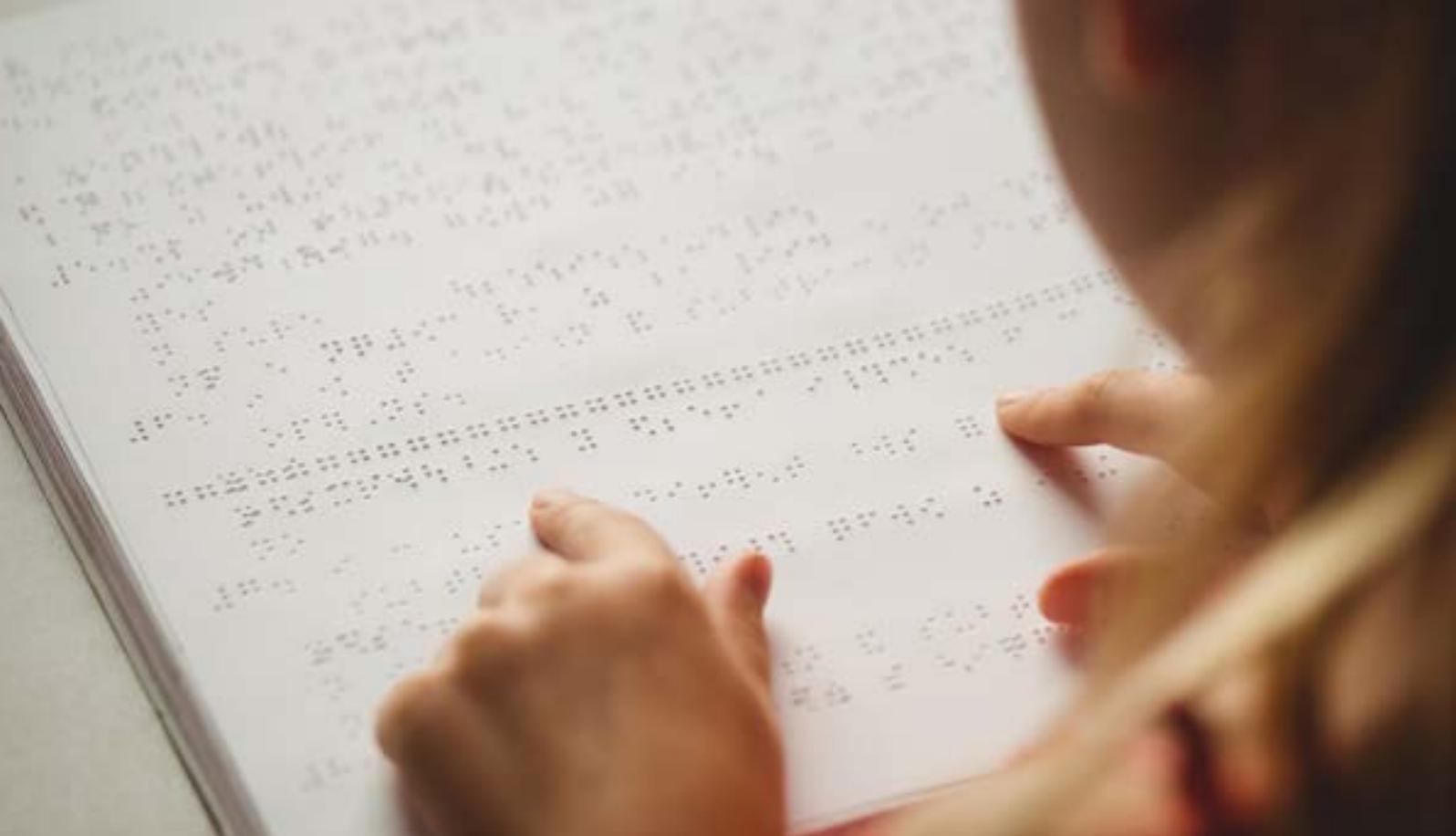
Photosensitivity

E.g. epilepsy where individuals are affected by flickering/strobe lighting or motion



Mental

Learning and cognitive impairments



Fortunately, advances in technology are making it easier for companies to implement accessible features at scale. Both Google and Apple already adapt many of their mainstream products for disabled consumers. Google has made Android fully usable by voice, teaming up with outside vendors to give Android eye-tracking capabilities. It has also launched the Google Impact Challenge, a \$20 million fund to generate ideas about how to make the world more accessible for people living with disabilities

Apple's offer includes the Apple Watch, Switch Control, Live Listen, SpeakScreen and VoiceOver, with the aim that Apple products can be used by 'every single person'. By building accessibility features into their devices and operating systems, technology companies like Apple and Google are also making these available to the third party equipment and software suppliers (e.g. app developers) that form part of their ecosystems.

Accessible design is in turn driving innovation in the technology sector. The complex needs that users with disabilities may have require different solutions that then result in smart technologies and infrastructure with a range of new applications. Autocomplete and voice assistance are just two examples of computer features that

are now ubiquitous, but which were originally created specifically for disabled users.

So, as Eve Andersson - Google's Director of Accessibility Engineering – attests, inclusive design really is good for everyone. That's especially true if we consider, as Barclays have, that there are times when those without a permanent disability can benefit from what they call 'design for difference'. Closed captions on videos when you can't listen to the audio, and pram-friendly buses are two prime examples.

Barclays' mobile banking app and Pingit payment platform illustrate how services can also be made more accessible through technology. Another example is Airbnb's recent acquisition of London startup Accomable to offer customers more disability-friendly travel options. Inclusive design is ultimately about ensuring that the user journey or experience is the same for everyone, across all forms of contact. This principle applies as much to organisational processes and policies as it does to products and services. By accommodating those with more specific needs you will widen access and participation and cultivate a virtuous circle of inclusion that helps your customers and their communities - and your business.

Diversifying your workforce

The disability employment gap has been a persistent problem in the UK for more than three decades. In 2017 there were 3.5 million disabled people of working age (16-64) in employment - an employment rate of 49.2% compared to 80.6% for people without disabilities. This represents a disability employment gap of 31.3%, which is less than 5% lower than the gap recorded in 1998.

Though the official number of unemployed disabled people recorded last year was 346,000 (an unemployment rate of 9%), 3.8 million were economically inactive. According to Citizens Advice, there are an estimated 1.4 million out-of-work disabled people who would like to work, but only a third are actively seeking a job.

This disparity points to the real and perceived barriers to disabled people entering the workplace that must be addressed through action at all levels – from government and civil society initiatives right down to the company, director and line manager levels. Achieving the government's ambitious goal of getting one million more people with disabilities into employment over the next ten years means growing the current disabled workforce by almost 30% by 2027.

Yet, according to research Purple conducted last year, almost half of UK businesses (45%) said they were apprehensive about hiring someone with a disability because of fears they wouldn't be able to do the job. This has to change. The

first step for any organisation is to understand the different types of barriers that can prevent a disabled person from being suitable, or even being able to apply, for a job.

While there are legal protections in place (predominantly through the Equality Act 2010) to prevent discrimination, the evidence suggests that we must take further collective action to accelerate the rate of progress. Based on the barriers above, there are two clear areas for action – improving organisations' and individuals' understanding and knowledge of the issues, and practical steps to reduce the barriers to attracting, recruiting and retaining disabled talent.

We have already touched on culture and attitude change, which is equally as important in the workplace as in the rest of daily life. The more open your organisation can be about disability, and the more public information you have on the ways you support disabled people, the more likely it is that disabled people will apply for a job with you. Plus, existing employees will be more willing share their specific needs with managers so they can get the necessary support to do their jobs to the best of their ability.



Historical barriers

- The candidate may not have had equal access to the types of development opportunities such as school qualifications, further education, work experience or training
- Prejudice on the part of the recruiter who may struggle to see past gaps on the candidate's CV or in their experience to recognise their true potential in the right role



Physical barriers

- Inaccessible workplaces or work equipment required to do the job
- Jobs not advertised, and applications not accepted, in accessible formats e.g. inaccessible websites
- Inappropriate or inaccessible suitability testing during the recruitment process
- Lack of flexibility in job requirements (such as stating that the candidate must have their own car if this is not absolutely necessary for performing the role)



Attitudinal barriers - employers

- A general lack of understanding of the needs of disabled people and the equipment and support available
- The belief that meeting the needs of disabled employees will cost more in time and resources
- The misconception or prejudice that a disabled person cannot perform the role as well as a non-disabled person
- A lack of confidence in interacting with, and managing, disabled people, often driven by a fear of causing offence
- (Often false) preconceptions around how disabilities will affect day-to-day performance, e.g. more time off sick, lower productivity, won't stay in post as long



Attitudinal barriers – disabled people

- A lack of confidence in their own abilities
- Disillusionment from multiple previous rejections based on their disability status
- Fear of discrimination
- A lack of interview experience

What often gets lost in the discussion around disability in work is the scale of the opportunity if we get it right. Raising employment rates for disabled people to the national average the UK economy would boost the economy by £13 billion. McKinsey's 2015 Diversity Matters report found strong correlations between company diversity (gender and ethnic) and financial performance across multiple territories. With businesses seeking ways to differentiate their products and services, the

pool of disabled talent available represents a wealth of creative thinking, different perspectives and approaches. For example, IT consultancy Auticon's has turned neurodiversity into a competitive advantage. Understanding the 'big picture' business case for taking on more disabled staff is just one area of knowledge we need to address. We must also debunk some of the most common myths around disability in the workplace.

Autistic talent thrives at Auticon

Auticon is an award-winning IT consultancy with a difference – it only employs consultants that are on the autistic spectrum. After initial success in Germany, where it has over 100 consultants, Auticon expanded to the UK and hasn't looked back, winning blue chip clients including Experian, Allianz and GSK.

The proposition to customers is purely commercial - based on the fact that their consultants have exceptional cognitive skills and therefore add value to complex IT projects. As well as their greater capacity for lateral thinking and pattern spotting, autistic professionals' tendency to be forthright is a particular advantage in delivering compliance projects.

Clearly, building and managing such a unique team requires a different approach. UK CEO Ray Coyle elaborates: "We can't rely on normal recruitment channels. We can't judge people by their CVs and we don't do interviews. When you remove these elements from the process you have to focus on skills. We ask our candidates to choose which skills they want to be assessed for so they can showcase

their ability. This works out better for them and for us. They are better suited for the roles we assign to them, so our retention rate is extremely high."

Auticon employs job coaches who liaise with customers to make the reasonable adjustments required for the consultants they will be working with. For instance, staff have the option to contribute to meetings via instant messenger (Slack) or email if they would prefer not to attend in person.

Coyle says he expects Auticon UK to double in size and is looking to expand outside of London. "We've built a profitable business with autistic talent at its heart. I think one of the most key things other employers can learn from us is the importance of understanding the individual and making the specific adjustments they need to be successful. We have consultants who don't like to shake hands, but our customers only care about the results they deliver. To access the things people are great at, we need to stop focusing on what they aren't good at."



Myth(s)	Reality
"It will be expensive for an employer to hire a disabled person"	Disabled people require fewer reasonable workplace adjustments than many people think. When these are required, the average cost is £184 (with government support often available) and many involve changes in policy and therefore cost nothing.
"A disabled employee won't be as productive as a non-disabled employee" "A disabled employee will spend more time off sick" "A disabled employee will struggle to stay with us as long"	Evidence from a number of different studies suggests higher loyalty shown by disabled employees toward their employer, equivalent productivity and lower absence records compared to their peers.
"If I do hire a disabled person, it's going to be really hard to fire them if I need to"	Anti-discrimination and employment laws are in place to protect all workers, not just those with disabilities. It's about having the right people management processes in place.
"A disabled employee is going to take up more of my time/a manager's time and attention"	With the right induction, training, and reasonable adjustments, there is no reason why a disabled staff member should necessarily require more assistance with their workload than any other.

Once these attitudinal barriers to disability employment start to be corrected, organisations can turn to the practical challenges that do need to be addressed if disabled people are going to be successful in the workplace.

Recruitment and training practices

Review how you advertise job openings and your recruitment process:

- Is your careers page accessible?
- Is job information available in accessible formats?

- Does your employer branding make it clear that you are an equal opportunities employer?
- Do your current interview processes exclude certain types of candidates or preclude them from performing to the best of their abilities?
- Can you provide alternatives to psychometric and value-based forms of testing to allow neurodiverse candidates to be considered on a level playing field?

Virgin Media: Supporting disabled people to get into and stay in work

In September 2017, Virgin Media announced a new three-year strategic partnership with leading disability charity Scope to support one million disabled people in getting into and staying in work by the end of 2020. Their joint #WorkWithMe campaign launched shortly after, with backing from Sir Richard Branson. Both organisations have committed to:

- deliver a digital employment service providing Information and advice to disabled people to build confidence when applying for jobs or getting ahead in the workplace
- work with other employers and Government to address the issues faced by disabled people in the workplace more quickly by sharing key learnings
- share success stories and promote discussion of disability employment issues in the media to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes

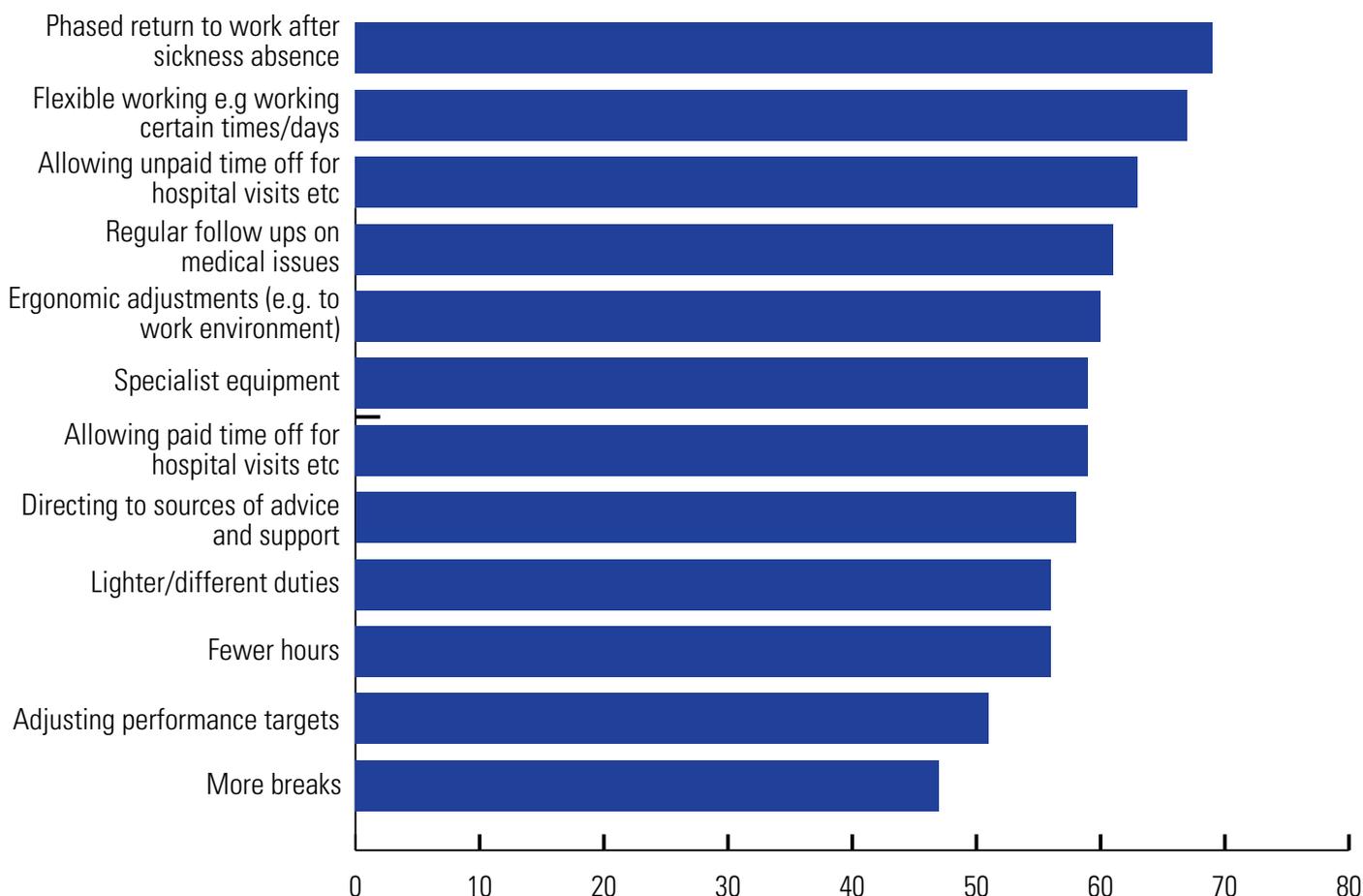
Katie Buchanan, Head of Sustainability, explains why the campaign is important: "At Virgin Media we believe in making good things happen. Through our brand, we've proven that we have the power to inspire

people everywhere and to use our unique capabilities to tackle big challenges, such as the disability employment gap. With the employment gap stuck at around 30% for more than a decade, we're committed to working with Scope to address the barriers that create this gap"

Partnering with Scope has inspired Virgin Media to transform how it supports their disabled employees and customers. Virgin Media has been working to identify and remove barriers across the organisation, this includes transforming the way it provides reasonable adjustments (now called WorkWithMe adjustments).

Buchanan adds "We want everyone at Virgin Media to have a great experience and when it comes to our disabled colleagues we are passionate about removing barriers to performance so people feel included, empowered and able to be their best selves at work. By fostering an inclusive culture that values differences, we are bringing fresh and diverse perspective to the business which in turn enables us to provide the best customer experience."

Changes made to working practices to support the retention of disabled people or people with health conditions



You must also ensure hiring and line managers feel confident working with and managing disabled candidates and employees. 22% of hiring managers surveyed by Purple admitted they were worried about interviewing someone with a disability in case they do or say the wrong thing.

Working practices

The table below outlines some of the most common workplace adjustments according to over 1,100 line managers surveyed by Citizens Advice. Note that the top four all relate to HR policy – physical adjustments (either to the workplace or equipment) rank fourth and fifth. Returning to the myth regarding the cost of reasonable adjustments, disabled employees can apply for a grant from the government’s Access to Work scheme. Grants can be used

to pay for special equipment, adaptations or support worker services, and for help getting to and from work.

Many organisations already offer this kind of flexibility to staff, whether that’s for changes of circumstance (having a baby is a common one) or simply because it’s a better fit for the type of work that they do and the types of people they need to recruit. This shouldn’t be any different for disabled people. If anything, there has been a tendency to over-think the ‘problems’ that have historically been associated with hiring disabled people. We hope that in this chapter we have shown that in the majority of cases a coherent, common-sense approach to modifying recruitment and workplace practices can open up opportunities for disabled employees and their employers.

iansyst: Creating a disability dialogue

2018 marks iansyst's thirty-fifth year of helping disabled people as one of the UK's leading assistive technology providers. The company offers a wide range of products, including assistive software, devices, and computer solutions, as well as training and consultancy services, to employers and the education and health care sectors.

Managing Director Janine King says that the company has observed some encouraging trends in recent years. "An increasing number of employers want us to help them and their staff to improve their workplace capacity and become more inclusive. The process feels more collaborative now, too."

"We are also seeing higher demand for coaching for disabled staff who have received workplace adjustments. This provides an opportunity for an individual to discuss their aims, aspirations and strengths, and for us to understand specific characteristics of

their disability or impairment and help them achieve in their job. Co-coaching with their line manager can also help to bring about improved understanding and facilitate further practical workplace changes."

The company leads by example – 25% of staff have a disability. King believes that building a dialogue around disability that involves everyone is crucial to creating the right work environment. "Those of us on the board need to take the lead. Why not start with directors disclosing if they have a disability to set a great example for the rest of your staff?"

"We also invite disabled individuals to come in as guest speakers and share their day-to-day challenges and successes with the team. By making it an enjoyable and engaging experience, everyone learns more about disability and it sparks further discussion and sharing amongst the team."



Senior leadership representation

Diversity at the board and senior leadership levels has been a hot topic for a number of years now. Many of the arguments in favour of greater board diversity have already been made elsewhere in this review. Whether it's gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or another category, a company stands a better chance of staying connected to their customers and communities if their leadership can draw on the broadest possible range of experiences.

In 2016 the number of FTSE 100 CEOs with the first name David (8) was higher than the total number of female chief executives (6). Like many media-friendly statistics, this fact isn't a fair reflection of what is a complex issue, but it does paint a vivid picture of the challenge that lies ahead.

As we showed in The research gap, there is a lack of reliable data on disability at the board and senior leadership levels. Anecdotal evidence (can you name a prominent disabled CEO?) would suggest that disabled people are significantly under-represented at the senior level.

Growing the proportion of disabled people on boards can only help organisations to focus on how they can become more inclusive as employers and in the delivery of their products and services. But they have an important external role to play, too. Those who successfully break the 'disability glass ceiling' must be role models, inspiring others to believe in their talents and to find opportunities for progression.

Changing perceptions

Having more public figures talking openly about their disabilities also de-stigmatises the issue and combats the lingering perception that showing weakness or vulnerability can hold you back in your career. Charities such as Rethink and Mind, alongside high-profile figures like JK Rowling, have helped to change the public debate around mental health, for example.

We are also starting to see a similar culture change at the board level. Richard Branson regularly talks about how misconceptions about his dyslexia held him back at school. His charity Made By Dyslexia actively campaigns to promote understanding of, and support people with, dyslexia. Virgin Money chief executive Jayne-Anne Gadhia decided to open up about her battles with mental health in her autobiography and donate the proceeds to Heads Together. António Horta-Osório, group chief executive of Lloyd's Banking Group, spoke about the toll the bank's turnaround took on his mental wellbeing.



Others are setting up initiatives to help candidates from diverse backgrounds to get a seat at the board table. This is the specific aim and focus of social enterprise Board Apprentice. Lawyer Robert Hunter, a partner at Edmonds, Marshall, McMahon, set up City Disabilities after experiencing progressive hearing loss during his career. City Disabilities is a free mentoring scheme for disabled professionals, connecting them with experienced mentors from the private and public sectors.

The majority of the experts we interviewed for this review spoke about the importance of the people at the top of the organisation setting the right tone. The title we chose – Leading from the front – reflects our collective confidence in the power of the business community to bring about meaningful change. That starts with the individual, so ask yourself what you can say or do today that can make a difference tomorrow.

Board Apprentice: Driving board diversity

Board Apprentice is a not-for-profit social franchise dedicated to increasing diversity, and as a result quality, on boards globally. They do this by widening the pool of board-ready talent and developing tomorrow's board members today.

"We identify and place high-calibre, diverse candidates as 'board apprentices' on boards for one year, allowing them to gain first-hand experience through observation of the workings and dynamics of a board," says Board Apprentice Global's UK Advisory Board Chair Dowshan Humzah.

"Apprentices emerge with the practical experience and understanding necessary to further qualify them to take on board roles. Over 50% of our apprentices find a board position within a year. We would like to see every board providing a 'seat' at the board table for an apprentice to learn by observation and being mentored."

Board Apprentice adopts a broad definition of diversity that goes beyond visible diversifying aspects such as gender, ethnicity, age and physical disability to include less apparent aspects such as: personality, sexual orientation and neurodiversity. "I like to refer to it as diversity of POETS - Perspective, Outlook, Experience, Thought, Sector and social background," adds Humzah. Two autism-focused charities - Autistica and Autism Jersey – are amongst the organisations that are exploring autism at the board level through apprenticeships.

The benefit of the scheme is not just in growing the number of eligible board candidates from diverse backgrounds. Host boards improve their diversity and inclusion awareness and impact, and Board Apprentice has observed a strong tendency for host boards to take increasingly diverse apprentices the more times they participate.

The government view - promoting Disability Confident organisations



The Government has made a commitment to support 1 million more disabled people into work over the next 10 years. Its flagship Disability Confident scheme aims to complement a range of programmes already in place to support disabled people, such as the aforementioned Access to Work grants.

The idea behind Disability Confident is that it is business-led, putting employers firmly at the centre of a movement of change to increase the number of employment opportunities for disabled people. A Business Leaders Group of board level company representatives and 11 sector 'champions' inform the government's approach and act as ambassadors for the scheme in their own organisations and extended networks.

There are three different Disability Confident status levels:

Level 1



Disability Confident Committed

Employers start their Disability Confident journey by signing up to the scheme and to a number of Disability Confident statements. They will also identify at least one thing that they can do that will make a difference for disabled people, for example: offering targeted work experience or apprenticeships.

Level 2



Disability Confident Employer

To become a Disability Confident Employer, the organisation will need to undertake an online self-assessment measured against set criteria. They will also need to demonstrate action in supporting disabled people into work.

Level 3



Disability Confident Leader

To become a Disability Confident Leader an employer must put their self-assessment up for external evaluation and demonstrate leadership by encouraging and supporting other employers on their Disability Confident journeys (see *The supply chain effect*).

The ultimate aims of Disability Confident are to challenge attitudes towards, and increase understanding of, disability and to help remove barriers to disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. It's also about ensuring that disabled people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. Having the Disability Confident accreditation helps companies to be identified by customers, prospective employees, and partner businesses as equal opportunities employers.

Since Disability Confident was formally launched in November 2016 over 5,000 employers have signed up to the scheme at different levels. All major central government departments, as well as leading names from the private sector such as Fujitsu, Sainsbury's, and Virgin Money have achieved Leader status.

For the scheme to reach its full potential, this number must continue to grow quickly. The government is working with its stakeholders and partners to increase awareness and sign ups through communications campaigns, events and other activities. It is also committed to signing up all government agencies and arms length bodies as well as encouraging take up amongst Local Authorities, the Police and Fire Authorities, and NHS Trusts.

"The Disability Confident scheme forms an important part of our plans to see one million more disabled people in work by 2027. Signing up to Disability Confident sends a powerful message to potential employees that they will get the support they need to thrive in the workplace, which is why I'm so pleased that around 6,000 employers across the country have now signed up. This includes 2,000 employers of more than 250 staff, more than a quarter of all large employers in the country.

Disability Confident can offer your organisation a valuable support network and guidance to help you create a more inclusive workplace. Disabled people can bring unique skills and talents to your organisation, so it's really important that senior managers are fully engaged with disability employment to ensure your business isn't missing out on this huge pool of talent."

Sarah Newton

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work

Diversity, corporate governance, and your investors

Following high profile scandals involving some of the world's best-known consumer brands, governments, regulators and shareholders have trained their sights on company culture, starting right at the top. Boards must concern themselves with both the organisational and financial health of the companies they oversee and make senior leadership accountable for corporate culture.

In the UK, the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has been taking a greater interest in this agenda. In July 2016 it published its observations following interviews with more than 80 Chief Executives and Chairmen in its Corporate Culture and the Role of Boards report. A healthy corporate culture, the report concluded, "is a valuable asset, a source of competitive advantage and vital to the creation and protection of long-term value... Directors should not wait for a crisis before they focus on company culture."

One of the implications of the FRC's findings is that the role of the non-executive director (NED) is evolving. In future there will be greater emphasis on the range of skills and experience that NEDs bring to the boardroom table. As argued in the report, NEDs will need to become "more culturally aware, more tuned in and more

knowledgeable about human behaviours and relationships."

Increasing diversity at the board level and throughout the workforce is one of the ways that companies can boost their cultural awareness and access a wider pool of experience that can inform their approach to culture. Lack of diversity was one of the specific areas for vigilance flagged in the corporate culture report. The FRC is now formalising its views on culture by embedding them in its proposed changes to the Corporate Governance Code.

Under the spotlight

Following a consultation last year, announced in the Summer of 2018. Also referencing the Hampton-Alexander Review (gender) and Parker Review (ethnicity) reports on diversity, the new Code will challenge directors to look closely at the composition of their boards and management pipelines.

The Code will also encourage boards to examine how they can access more diverse thinking through wider engagement with their stakeholders, and their workforces in particular. A number of different mechanisms are already being explored, including employee

Increasing diversity at the board level and throughout the workforce is one of the ways that companies can boost their cultural awareness and access a wider pool of experience that can inform their approach to culture.

representatives on boards, assigning a named director responsible for understanding the workforce, and running employee forums that are attended by directors. By exposing boards to a greater volume and variety of insight from staff, the aim is to create more opportunities for diversity issues to be raised at the highest level within the company.

It's not just regulators that have put diversity in their crosshairs – it's becoming a bigger priority for investors too. Leading global investors are growing their corporate governance teams to support their shift in emphasis to sustainable investment practices. This is being driven in part by the preferences of the younger generations who are a growing source of capital as they get on the property ladder and start saving for the future. Research from asset manager Schrodgers found that sustainability is an important investment criterion for 52% of millennials. This will fuel demand for financial products that combine performance with positive impact.



“The surrounding ecosystem is evolving to meet new demand for sustainable investment opportunities, including in the field of data and analytics.”

According to one large institutional investor, adopting an environmental, social and governance (ESG) framework for its investments is not just about corporate responsibility, it believes it will improve financial performance. BNP Paribas (with almost €2 trillion in assets) says the integration of ESG criteria into their investment processes “helps our clients to create financial value over the long term and protect themselves from the reputational, financial and operational risks involved in investing in companies with poor environmental, social or governance practices.”

Some are using their market strength to influence board level thinking. Blackrock is responsible for \$6 trillion in assets, making it the world’s largest investment company. Earlier this year it was reported that Chief Executive Laurence Fink sent a letter to publicly listed companies warning them that they must show they care about more than making a profit by making a positive contribution to society.

Reaping the business benefits

The surrounding ecosystem is evolving to meet new demand for sustainable investment opportunities, including in the field of data and analytics. New York-based Fifth Quadrant Analytics has even started to look at the return on disability for companies and investors. They publish daily indices for the U.S. and Canada on Bloomberg: “These equity indices recognize public companies that are outperforming in the disability market. The indices give investors a simple way to identify Environmental, Social and corporate Governance investments that have a higher probability of creating shareholder value over time.”

You may have noted that this is the first time disability has been mentioned specifically in this section. Though we would expect disability to be considered within the broader term of ‘diversity’, it shows that there is still work to do in encouraging those concerned with corporate governance to focus on disability issues. Following on from our discussion in The research gap, it’s unclear whether wider social impact reporting, including specific metrics on disability will become mandatory in future (outside of gender pay gap reporting).

We currently know of no concrete plans in this area, so there is an open window of opportunity for boards to be proactive. There has yet to be a major corporate controversy (that we know of) involving disability discrimination. Yet it would only take one scandal hitting the headlines to cause significant damage.

What is clear is that regulators and investors believe that the purpose of boards is broadening, and with it their scope to shape the future of their organisations for the better. While disability may not be explicitly mentioned, there is a growing expectation that equal treatment of your customers, staff and stakeholders is a fundamental part of being a good corporate citizen.





The supply chain effect

How do we spread the message more widely within the business community? Let's take environmental issues as an example. The CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project) collects and manages the world's most comprehensive set of self-reported environmental data. Last year the CDP analysed data from suppliers to 99 of the largest purchasing organisations in the world. They found that the collective efforts of these suppliers to cut their emissions resulted in 551 million fewer metric tonnes of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere - more than Brazil's total emissions for 2016.

Imagine applying that same level of influence to disability inclusion! Large businesses in particular have the purchasing power to shift entire markets and bring about permanent organisational change in the suppliers with which they work.

Many are already heavily engaged in workforce issues, for example, and are asking their existing supply chains and all prospective suppliers to be Living Wage employers. And we are now seeing Disability Confident leaders encouraging their suppliers to join them in signing up to the Disability Confident scheme.

In February 2018, KPMG asked its sustainable procurement group of suppliers to sign up to Disability Confident within the next 12 months. We are also seeing more of the tender applications we receive requesting data on workplace inclusion rates. While there is still a tendency for the focus to be on gender and ethnicity, there is once again a strong commercial case to add disability reporting as a way to incentivise greater uptake of disabled talent.

Powerful agents of change

This approach isn't limited to the private sector. Taken as a whole, the UK public sector has an enormous supply chain, providing goods and services worth more than £200 billion each year. Public procurement processes can be an equally effective agent of change.

For example, NHS England and NHS Employers are working to increase learning disability employment across the NHS, including through their major suppliers. One of these - ENGIE, a provider of energy-related services - has partnered with Mencap to offer supported internships to young people with learning disabilities and is opening up opportunities for them to get into paid employment through its NHS contracts.

So how do we get more suppliers to follow suit? First, it's important that we give these initiatives and other successes public recognition so they have inspiring stories and best practice to follow. The Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI)

Awards, which celebrates the efforts of both in-house and agency recruitment teams to improve the prospects for disabled jobseekers, has a specific award for supply chain management. We would encourage other industry awards bodies to consider introducing a similar category.

But there is also a need for greater accountability. The success of the CDP model for measuring the environmental impact of companies provides a strong argument for implementing a similar system of self-reported data to assess their social impact. Creating this kind of transparency can help organisations benchmark their performance against their competitors and make better decisions about which suppliers they choose to buy from in future.



Taking the next step: best practice for boards

It's one thing understanding the need for action – yet it's not always obvious what the next step should be. These are the top five things you can do (almost) immediately to boost your organisation's disability journey.

1. Put disability on the agenda for board meetings

Before deciding on a course of action there needs to be a detailed discussion about what the approach will be. One of the simplest but most effective changes you can make is therefore to commit to tabling disability as an agenda item during at least one board meeting a year. The #Valuable, movement, led by campaigner and social entrepreneur Caroline Casey, is aiming to get disability on the agenda of 500 company boards this year. Supporters include Unilever CEO Paul Polman and Verizon Wireless CEO Ronan Dunne.

2. Appoint a board-level disability champion

A common theme throughout this review has been the importance of accountability at the highest levels. Naming a senior director as your disability champion will help ensure that ideas and initiatives are followed through, especially when input is required from multiple departments and functions. It also demonstrates to staff that you take these issues seriously as an organisation.

3. Sign up to Disability Confident

The benefits of the Government's Disability Confident scheme have already been outlined in this review. Becoming Disability Confident sends a strong message that your organisation welcomes disabled talent and is dedicated to serving the needs of your diverse customer base.

4. Become a disability advocate

One of the most valuable things you can do as a senior leader is to inspire others to follow suit. If you already employ disabled people, tell your network how good it is for business and how you make it work within your organisation. Ask your suppliers to show that they value your custom by sharing your commitment to employing more disabled people. Use your public profile and speaking platforms to share success stories. And if you have a disability that no-one at work knows about, we hope you might consider making it known to colleagues so they feel more confident to share their own disabilities too.

5. Consider external partnerships

Disability can be a complex, sometimes sensitive, issue. Organisations can benefit from external advice and inspiration from those leading the way. Whether it's supporting a specific campaign – or working directly with disability-focused groups – there are many ways for your organisation to access a wealth of disability experience. The right specialist support can help you navigate those potentially tricky first conversations and get the right policies in place from the very start.



Conclusion: a better future for disability

As this review has shown, we still have a long way to go in achieving true equality for disabled people. Nevertheless, we shouldn't overlook the progress we've already made. As a society, we have become more accepting of difference and more intolerant of discrimination.

This is a core message and value of the Paralympics, perhaps the most prominent showcase of the talents of disabled people. It has seen its viewership more than double since Athens 2004 – with the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games reaching a cumulative TV audience of 4.1 billion people.

Of course, the Paralympic stage is a very different place from everyday life. However, its success is testament to what is possible when we shed our preconceptions and adopt a different mindset. The next step on the journey is to move from acceptance to actively embracing disabled people and the contributions they can make in and out of the workplace. It's not hard to picture a future in which:

- Disability is part of every company's customer service training programme
- The vast majority of disabled employees share their disability status with their employer
- Working alongside disabled colleagues has become so normal it's unremarkable
- Most people can name a chief executive with a known disability
- TV shows are anchored by disabled presenters and film directors are writing lead parts for Hollywood's top disabled actors

New solutions ahead

At the same time, advances in science and technology will open up new, exciting possibilities for disabled people. Developments in medical research will eliminate or limit the impact of some impairments. Doctors are already confident that they will soon be able to cure common types of blindness, to take just one example.

And, increasingly, when medical treatment is not an option, technology is stepping in. The Eyegaze Edge enables people with multiple sclerosis to operate a computer through eye movement alone. Microsoft's Seeing AI brings artificial intelligence to your smartphone so that it can recognise and narrate the world around you. Driverless cars will allow more disabled people to travel independently. And as the computing power of smartphones and other portable devices continues to grow, more and more people will be able to access and afford assistive technologies.

Sci-fi writer William Gibson quipped that "The future is already here – it's just unevenly distributed." This now infamous line eloquently describes the current status quo for disabled people. We have the main resource we need to create opportunities and improve outcomes for disabled people – knowledge. Sharing it is the key to delivering a truly inclusive future and unlocking a wealth of opportunities for organisations and individuals alike.

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David took responsibility for KPMG's Global Entity Management team in 2016, having previously spent 17 years with KPMG Makinson Cowell, where he provided corporate governance advice to large multinational companies. David has extensive experience in subsidiary governance, investor relations, shareholder identification and shareholder engagement on corporate governance matters. David is also Chairman of the KPMG Company Secretary Association in the UK, and as a qualified company secretary of 12 years', is heavily involved in promoting the profession through his work with the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators.

KPMG

KPMG LLP, a UK limited liability partnership, operates from 22 offices across the UK with over 14,000 partners and staff. KPMG is a global network of professional services firms providing Audit, Tax, and Advisory services. We operate in 154 countries and territories and have 197,263 people working in member firms around the world.



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Mike is CEO of Purple. In 2013 Mike chaired the national Access to Work Expert Advisory Panel which produced more than 20 recommendations to modernise the Government's flagship disability employment programme.

Mike is also a Non-Executive Director of a UK wide private care sector company involved in the delivery of social care. Mike's previous working track record includes being one of the senior management team at the Disability Rights Commission, Director of the National Disability Team for higher education and co-director of a disability research centre at Coventry University. He was awarded an OBE in 2012 for his services to disabled people.



Purple

Purple is a not for profit organisation that sees the world of disability as an opportunity. Purple have developed an array of products and services to support individual disabled people, and solutions for businesses to accelerate their organisational disability capacity and capability.

We work with businesses from across the private, public and voluntary sectors (and of all sizes) to unlock the power of disability.

wearepurple.org.uk

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Michael Harfleet started his commercial career within European subsidiaries of General Mills. Holding various Sales and Marketing roles over a 15 year period. After a further two years with Sara Lee subsidiary Jonker Fris in Holland he started an Import Brokerage business supplying the major UK Multiples.

After 10 years successful trading this was merged into Andutra a UK importer and Michael was appointed Development Director. In 2000 Michael started a partnership with Grupo Siro in Spain representing the Spanish Group in the UK. This is now a wholly owned subsidiary; Cerealto Siro Foods and Michael was the Managing Director. Appointed Chairman in 2015.

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dyslexic.com | www.iansyst.co.uk



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