
Opinion

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All inclusive

Disability inclusion

This year's FDA Annual Delegate Conference included a session on disability inclusion in the civil service. The speaker, Janet Hill, explains her new cross-Government role, including how members can get involved.



My job is leading a dedicated Disability Inclusion Team, supporting Civil Service Disability Champion Philip Rutnam in the delivery of a highly

ambitious change programme. Based alongside the Cabinet Office Civil Service Workforce Strategy and Inclusion Team, our sole focus is on improving the day-to-day experiences of our disabled colleagues.

Our approach is practical; a call for action to disabled and non-disabled colleagues alike, drawing on our collective effort to leverage a step-change in behaviour and culture across the business. We each need to take responsibility – that's the only way we will create a social movement and deliver lasting change.

Over the last few years, we have worked closely with our Civil Service Disability Network, trade unions and a wide range of other partners. Forging such partnerships leads to innovation. An example of this is our new Bursary Scheme. Funded by inclusive recruiter and consultancy firm Equal Approach, it is about investing in the development of leadership capability, as part of a shared venture to become the UK's most inclusive employer.

In partnership with the charity



Ambitious About Autism, we are also running an expanded autism workplace placement programme. Building on last year's successful trial in DWP and HMRC, the extended programme (involving the Departments for Transport, Education and Business), is targeted at talented young people with autism, to help them gain work experience, build self-confidence and encourage them to consider roles in the public sector. These young people also help us to increase our own understanding of what it means to work alongside and support our colleagues with autism.

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be credible we have to improve the standard and consistency of workplace adjustments by ensuring that colleagues and line managers know how to access quick, high-quality adjustments, and know where to go for that support. Where unions and their members can play a crucial role is in increasing awareness of the Civil Service Workplace Adjustment Team's services, such as the Review Route and Workplace Adjustments Passport. The passport, a cross-civil service record of agreed workplace adjustments, aims to make it easier for employees with a disability or health condition to move jobs within the service.

A culture change of this magnitude will take time, but it's important that with each step we aim for full inclusion, and that whatever we do is in the pursuit of sustainable change. Practical things make such a difference, like departments buying into the Positive Action Pathway, a structured development programme for talented disabled, women, minority ethnic, and LGBT colleagues. It equips participants with the skills and confidence to achieve their full potential and career progression.

Initial evaluation shows that one in four participants secured promotion within three months of completing the programme, thereby building a growing and increasingly strong talent pipeline into the SCS. In all, 1,200 people will graduate in 2015-16, 271 of whom are disabled.

This is just a flavour of the exciting work I am involved in, and you can expect to see and hear much more about all of this in the coming months.

Janet Hill is the Programme Director of Civil Service Disability Inclusion.