How to engage your HR department in the inclusive recruitment agenda

Why is it important?
HR departments are responsible for recruitment procedure and policy. Gaining buy-in from HR colleagues can help strengthen an organisation’s workplace practice in terms of accessibility, inclusivity and support for disabled employees and those with learning disabilities and difficulties (LDD).

1. Understand HR priorities
This is key to successfully engaging colleagues in your ideas for change. HR colleagues will be interested in:
   • making recruitment processes as simple as possible
   • ensuring recruitment and workplace support is fair and accessible
   • ensuring the organisation’s reputations is upheld across the local community and it is regarded as an employer of choice
   • how this agenda can be embedded within normal recruitment and workplace support policy.

Having a clear understanding of HR’s objectives is crucial and helps you to tailor engagement with HR colleagues.

2. Communicate directly
There are different routes to engaging with HR. Here are some suggested actions.
   • Book a meeting with HR or ask for a slot at an existing meeting.
   • Adapt and use our template presentation for HR colleagues. You don’t have to use slides, but they can help to present a clear and data-driven business case.
   • Discuss with HR colleagues how you could work together on the design and delivery of current recruitment training for line managers.
Any presentation you give should:

- identify the benefits of recruiting a diverse workforce and the impact it can have on core organisational priorities and strategies
- acknowledge the ongoing good work in the organisation but highlight what more could be done to recruit and support disabled staff.

3. Show the impact of a diverse workforce
HR colleagues will know the legal requirements your organisation should meet under the Equality Act 2010 but may be less aware of why fulfilling this agenda is good for business.

Our template presentation includes research that supports employing a diverse workforce and the specific benefits of employing more disabled people.

You could make the presentation interactive by asking colleagues to consider the challenges a disabled person may face in seeking employment or training.

4. Reflect on current practice and future possibilities
Sharing our candidate journey map will assist in HR critically evaluating established processes, and provide ideas to make the recruitment process more accessible.

Together, you could explore ways of making recruitment more accessible such as:

- considering new approaches to advertising outside of traditional channels, for example, posting adverts with disabled people’s organisations or charities
- ensuring all adverts and recruitment information is available in easy read and multiple accessible formats
- discussing whether Access to Work could help new or existing staff.

5. Build and explain the business case
The following points are key areas to include in your business case.

Costs
You could consider:

- costs of resources
- human costs such as those running any recruitment or equality and diversity training and time lost to attend the training
- the loss incurred from not improving recruitment and support to disabled staff
- the return on investment.
Benefits and losses

When describing the benefits, you could include:

- improved innovation
- supporting workforce supply challenges
- better patient care
- working towards your organisation’s Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES).

Potential risks could include:

- ongoing workforce supply challenges – highlighted in vacancy rates and staff turnover
- continued poor staff experience for disabled staff
- large numbers of unemployed disabled people.

Learning from others

Including evidence of the positive changes made by other organisations can be a powerful way to show HR colleagues that the agenda is important and achievable.

A good example comes from Barts Health NHS Trust which supported interns with learning disabilities through Project Search and the benefits gained through implementing this approach.

Use your data to show impact

- Use our Measuring up tool to establish the current representation in your workforce and the potential talent pool that the organisation could be tapping into locally.
- These statistics can highlight how recruiting more inclusively can be a solution to workforce supply issues.

Timeframes and actions

- Outline the actions you would like your HR colleagues to take around this agenda and provide timescales on the work you are doing and what you are asking of them.