



Leadership

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Effective leadership inspires an inclusive culture where your whole organisation considers the needs of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.

By identifying disabled people and people with long-term health conditions as a priority audience, you can go on to create the conditions where inclusion becomes 'business as usual'. Proactive leaders embrace inclusion to drive organisational change.



What makes your leadership inclusive?

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Your organisation should have a well-informed strategy around inclusion. Your challenge as a leader is to bring this to life in day-to-day operations. Successful inclusive leadership will involve:

 Embedding equality into everything you do.

 Fostering an inclusive set of behaviours and culture where disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are always valued and included.

 Communicating and reinforcing a strong inclusion message across your organisation and beyond.

 Ensuring disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are included within leadership and governance structures.

 Bringing people together to have authentic and diverse conversations, and to seek out best practice.

 Being willing to try new approaches, making sure they are suitably resourced, accessible and inclusively designed.

 Prioritising lasting change by monitoring and being accountable for progress towards your inclusion goals.



Think about your current leadership approach and ask yourself:

- Is inclusion fully embedded within your organisation's values and culture?
- How do you demonstrate your commitment to inclusion?
- How are your workforce, stakeholders, disabled people, and people with long-term health conditions engaged in the inclusion process?



Developing inclusive leadership

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There are many ways leaders can drive forward inclusion and meet the needs of people from under-represented groups, including disabled people and people with long-term health conditions:

Enable inclusive practices

Embracing equality at every stage of your business planning is vital. Think about your governance arrangements, operational plans, and resource allocations:

- Do these show that disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are a significant focus for your organisation?
- Can you use these processes to increase accessibility and inclusion across all areas of your business?
- How can you enable your teams to suggest actions for improvement?



Top tip: It is important to create the conditions for effective working. People may require increased capacity to contribute to this area. You may need to invest in individuals and their skills development or identify budget and other assets to do this effectively.

Use communication and influence

Achieving inclusion involves every part of your organisation. Everyone from trustees and senior leaders, to frontline delivery staff, needs to be aware of and advocating your inclusion objectives. Ask yourself:

- What methods can you use to connect and engage with your workforce?
- How can you communicate with and influence external stakeholders?
- Can you help to embed inclusion through your supply chains?
- What about commissioners and your response to service specifications?
- How else could you promote inclusion in your interactions with others?



Top tip: Adding inclusion and ways to tackle inequalities to meeting agendas, reporting systems, regular updates, and events is a great starting point.

Value co-production and lived experience

One of the most impactful ways to foster an inclusive culture is to implement processes for co-design with disabled people and across your wider teams. Building strong relationships with key disability partners at local and national levels will support this approach.

Pulling together a diverse range of people brings focus, accountability, and should create meaningful change. Inclusion champions, diversity teams, and service improvement groups can help you achieve more accessible practices. Whilst these can sit at all levels of your organisation, they will arguably have greatest influence if they include those in senior positions.

It is also essential to consider how disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are included within your organisation's leadership and governance. Ask yourself:

- Can you use coaching and mentoring to develop leadership capabilities?
- Is the inclusion of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions built into your succession planning?

Test and learn

Actively seeking out best practice, both internally and externally, will help you to build a more inclusive offer. A test and learn approach may be valuable, particularly if equality and the inclusion of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions is a relatively new focus for your organisation. Think about:

- Can you identify a venue, service, or process that can deliver inclusively and do it well?
- Could you use this to create a flagship approach and model of good practice to learn from before scaling up?

Share your successes

Regularly asking for ideas and feedback will help you to create improved offerings and delivery models. If you don't get things right, be honest and learn from any mistakes. As you monitor progress towards your inclusion targets don't forget to celebrate and communicate your successes too. Think about:

- How your organisation can develop and share evidence of improvements to generate further best practice.
- Ways to highlight how your inclusion work is making a positive contribution to your organisation's successes and outcomes.

Useful resources

Activity Alliance has a suite of resources and services that can support you with effective leadership.

- Our Lead programme supports providers and organisations to self-assess their offer for disabled people under a range of key themes. These include strategy, leadership, community engagement, and people management.

Find out more about our Lead programme on our website.

- Get Out Get Active's learning resources can support you to be genuinely inclusive.
- Perrett Laver's Board Recruitment Toolkit.
- KPMG report, Leading from the front - Disability and the role of the Board.



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This factsheet is part of our leisure resource. View the full resource on our website:

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This document is available in Word format. Please contact us if you need support. Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity no. 1075180.