

# The University of Manchester as Disability Confident Leader

The University of Manchester is exceptionally proud to have been validated as a Disability Confident Leader by the Business Disability Forum. Nonetheless we are aware that this is only the beginning of our leadership journey and as such are taking this commitment very seriously. The Business Disability Forum’s validation comments are critically important in assisting in the creation of an action plan for the next three years. Actions will be assigned to individuals to enable us to track progress and ensure accountability.

Our first action as a Disability Confident Leader will be to review and reconvene our self-assessment team (SAT) ensuring that all areas of the University community are represented in this group. The committee will be led by Professor Jackie Carter, EDI Academic Lead for Disability and supported by the EDI Partner for Disability, Kathryn Bradley. One of the key members of this SAT will be the manager of our Disability Advisory and Support Service who support all our staff who have disabilities and long-term health conditions with their adjustments to enable them to thrive and have a true sense of belonging at The University of Manchester.

Under this leadership the SAT will co-create with key partners, our action plan and oversee future accreditation applications. Governance by The University of Manchester EDI Committee will include regular appraisal of plans and progress.

One of our biggest challenges is collecting robust data from our staff to monitor progress. We will be improving our data collection processes so that we can track progress through recruitment, including interview invitations and outcomes. We will scrutinise where disabled people are being employed (across Professional Services and Academic roles) and where they are not progressing beyond the interview stages. We will also be paying close attention to career progression of disabled staff following appointment to a role.

We will work proactively with our Procurement department to ensure that they have received Disability Awareness training followed by ensuring a process is established to ensure that all suppliers are disability confident. Suppliers will be offered opportunities to engage with our disability awareness training offer and to work with the procurement team to ensure that procurement processes are inclusive of all protected characteristics.

We will work with our People and Organisational Development directorate to ensure that disability plays a key role in the training of recruitment managers. We will be reviewing how we attract more candidates with a disability or who live with a long-term health condition, including where we advertise our roles. We are also considering how we can offer work roles to people with Learning Disabilities. Our induction process is also currently under review to ensure that all new disabled staff are aware of the services, processes and policies that exist to support them. Collectively, with these actions, and a renewed attention on good data collection, we will monitor carefully the rate of increase of disabled employees at the University of Manchester.

We will revise our accessibility statement and ensure that the Disability Confident logos are prominent on all our communications.

We are actively expanding participation in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme to promote this in all Faculties and Professional Services directorates across the University. This is building on significant success achieved in our University Library. Ensuring we promote it with a strategic communications plan will enable staff and students to be aware of the benefits of this scheme.

We will continue to roll out our Equality Impact Assessment training to ensure that equality in general is considered whenever possible and that disability is considered on an anticipatory basis rather than reactively.

The Let’s Talk Disability series of audio-recorded and accessible conversations between senior leaders and disabled staff and students is set to expand and grow. By sharing the lived experience of disabilities in our community we are confident that our Disability Confident Leader status will be recognised by other Universities, and we are very pleased to be able to build on this innovation.

All of these actions and our future work are aligned within our University [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy](https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=64046) which has three pillars of work:

* Inclusive Environment and Culture
* Diversity and Equity across our Community
* Inclusive Practice

Whilst we know that disability often requires quite specialist actions, we are also mindful that all people have multiple identities, and we will work with our EDI colleagues to ensure that these intersectional needs are met.

Most importantly we will include disabled people in all our conversations, ensuring that they have a voice and are heard amongst our university and wider community.

