



'Allyship from the lens of disability'

23rd April 2026



How to use this pack

- ▶ Use this pack as part of your reflective practice, relating to your leadership development.
- ▶ Reflect on the session theme; using the **Our Focus** page to:
 - ▶ Ask yourself the **questions offered for consideration**
 - ▶ Choose one or more **blogs or resources** offered to help you reflect on the questions
- ▶ Read the **Enablers and Opportunities word-cloud** and **Call to Action** page to explore the themes, ideas, comments and take away points from the participants who attended the live event

Finally ask yourself:

- ▶ What have I learned from this experience, in the moment and now?
- ▶ What one thing will I do differently going forward?
- ▶ How can I commit to the actions I identified?

About Diversity Coffee Connect

Watch our 2 min animation on the aim and purpose of this programme

**Have you heard
about our
Diversity Coffee
Connect
programme?**



- ▶ Watch the video [here](#).

Our focus

In this session we explored the personal and professional journey often experienced by disabled people.

Sheila Hands, HR Adviser – Equality and Diversity at NHS Tayside, shared an opening perspective on the inequities and barriers experienced by disabled people, and offering causes for inequitable experiences. Sheila offered insight into existing disability data and practical considerations for disability allies and leadership at all levels.

Resources offered for consideration



Inclusive communication toolkit- [Supporting documents - Inclusive communication toolkit - gov.scot](#)



<https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/>

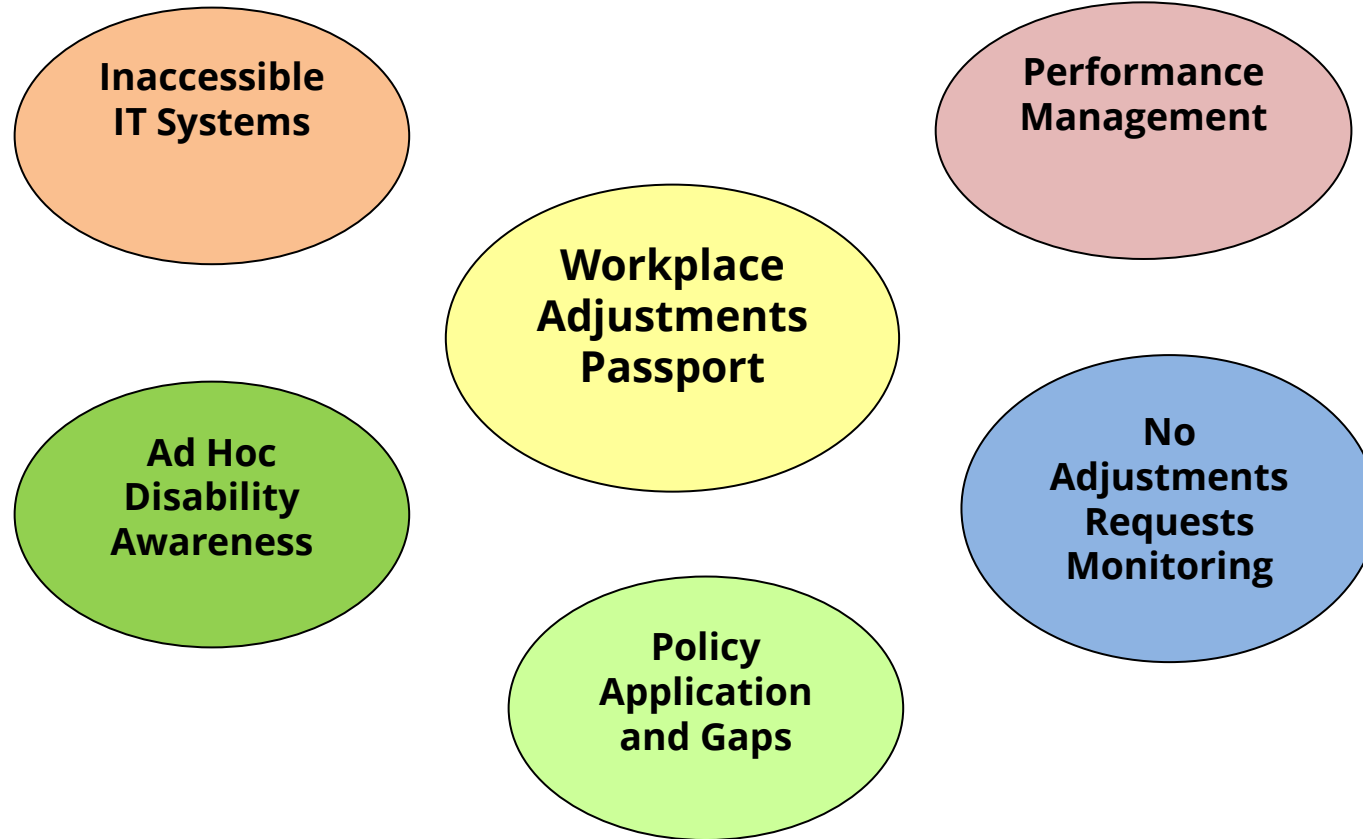


L2C resources on becoming active allies- [Leading to Change | Equalities | The Allyship Hub Programme](#)



<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

Main Causes of Inequitable Experiences



Barriers and Impacts

- Lack of IT service knowledge re supporting screen-reader computer access
- IT self-service help desk
- Profile access exceptions and software updates
- E-Payroll
- Timesheets
- Learn Pro
- EKSF
- Training course booking process
- Use of inaccessible PDFs
- Inaccessible recruitment forms

Personal and Professional Reflections

- Journey's frequently been hard, lonely but great for developing resilience and problem-solving skills;
- Change hampered due to structural barriers such as:
- Lack of consistent disability awareness;
- Ad hoc approach to the provision of workplace adjustments;
- Poor policy coverage (no Disability Leave or Workplace Adjustments Policies);
- Over reliance on national systems that have not been equality impact assessed or engaged with staff members who had lived experience of disability at the development stage;
- And inaccessible procurement practices that have significant negative impacts on some disabled staff.

Disability rates in Context

Known Data %	2021	2022	2023	2024	Scottish Census 2022
Disabled	1.16%	1.41%	1.62%	1.93%	24.00%
Ethnic Minority	8.11%	7.82%	9.80%	11.47%	12.90%
Gender Reassignment	0.05%	0.08%	0.09%	0.10%	0.44%
Sexual Orientation	2.60%	3.01%	3.39%	3.59%	4.00%

NHS Tayside equality monitoring (2021-2024)

Disability Ally Opportunities - General

- Listen to disabled people and share in identifying inclusive actions;
- Utilise your networks to promote disability inclusion – actions should always be informed via talking with disabled people first;
- Encourage the use of Equality Impact Assessments before any new initiatives/changes are considered and especially the inform, engage and consult requirement;
- Help create a positive culture - seek out Beyond Active Bystander training and learn effective tools to address unnecessary negative behaviours towards disabled people.

Disability Ally – Networks and Groups

- Engage with disabled staff/service users to understand priorities and desired outcomes;
- Work collaboratively sharing knowledge and experience with disabled people to promote wider or targeted disability inclusion;
- Raise awareness of disability inclusion issues with colleagues, Teams and other professional networks.



Image source: [International Disability Alliance](#)

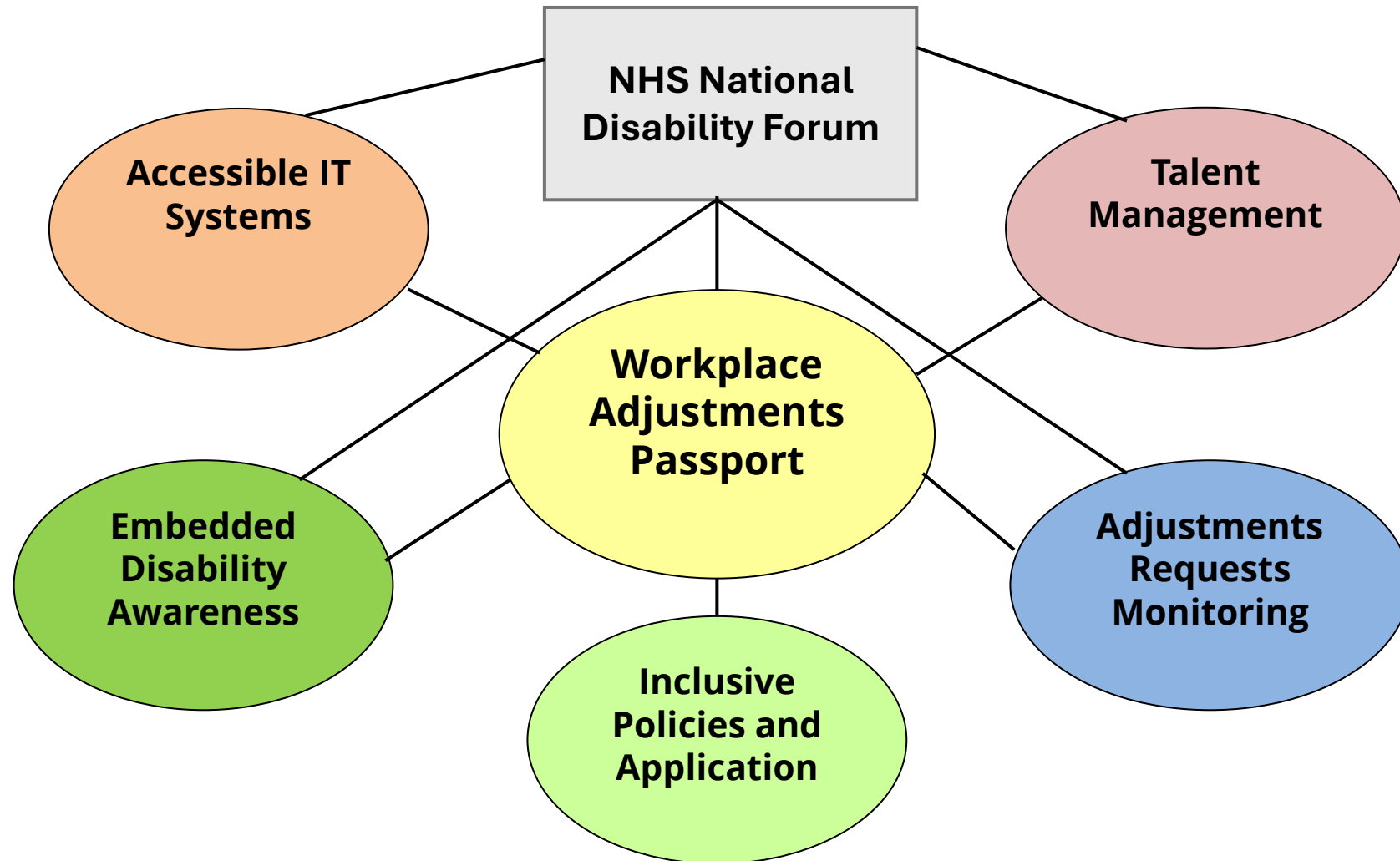
Disability Ally – Leadership Roles

- Ask disabled people about the functions of your service/workplace including:
 - Recruitment;
 - Development;
 - Promotion opportunities;
 - Inclusivity of service covering physical access, accessible and inclusive communication and attitudes towards disabled people;
 - Availability of and speed of access to adjustments;
 - Inclusive procurement decisions;
 - Effectiveness of policy coverage;
 - Monitor and review actions – regular staff surveys.

Promoting Best Practice

- **Business Disability Forum** – Check to see if your organisation is currently a member or partner, if so, organisation email addresses can be used to register for an account and provide access to resources.
- <https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/>
- **Disability Confident levels 1, 2 and 3** – organisations given support and guidance on the recruitment and retention of disabled people. Promotes progression towards becoming a Level 3 Leader and requires validation every 3 years to sustain commitments.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

Modelling Change – Disability Equity



What stood out to you?



recognise difference
inadequacy **Inequitable** engagement slow moving changes
resilience hard **Personal**
lobbying **Frustration** Listen
Enabling **Allyship** Early action
Equity
individual asset **Ask** opportunity
inaccessible barriers Awareness
disability confident leadership not equitable
Isolated personal journey
Workplace Adjustment Passports
Collaboration

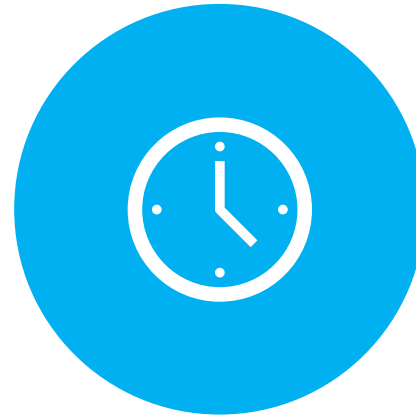
[Click here to view responses in plain text](#)

Group discussions

We invited our community to explore what this means for us, and what practical learning we can take away using breakout groups to enable real conversations and connections.



3 BREAKOUT ROOMS



TIME IN BREAK OUT
ROOM: **10 MINUTES**



EVENT DURATION: **60
MINUTES**

Call to action (I)

We collectively identified over 59 actions and insights, relating to 'one thing we can do' following our session. Here are some of the themes!

The difference it can make giving support to our colleagues

Challenge the system

Communication

Great info

Supportive team

Raising Awareness

Allyship

Shared experiences across organisations

excellent speaker

Reverse mentoring with senior leaders to raise equity levels

[Click here to view responses in plain text](#)

Call to action (II)

We collectively identified over 45 actions and insights, relating to 'one thing we can do' following our session. Here are some of the themes!

Welcoming session

Fundamental part of my role

Learn more from lived experience and how to be an active ally

Gems of information

Curiosity and conversation

Aware of more resources

Feedback to the system for process issues

helping others understanding why it's important

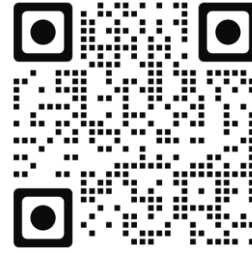
Personal experiences

Equity

Networks & Links

Be patient and change the pace

Moving forward



Scan for
events



▶ Tell us more hello@leadingtochange.scot

- ▶ How did you use this Insights pack? What was useful or what would you like to see?
- ▶ We would love to hear your ideas for potential topics and contributors
- ▶ Do you have thoughts and learning to share? Would you like to write a blog or know someone who could? Our team can fully support you with this.

▶ To find out more, please explore

- ▶ [Our Equalities page](#) – links and resources in relation to our Diversity Coffee Connect Series, the Allyship Hub, Leadership blogs and more.
- ▶ [Our many leadership, sector and programme resources](#) available to read, watch and engage with from internal and external sources

- ▶ We hope to see you again soon at one of our [next events](#) – scan the QR code above to find out more



Leading to Change: What's on Offer



Website



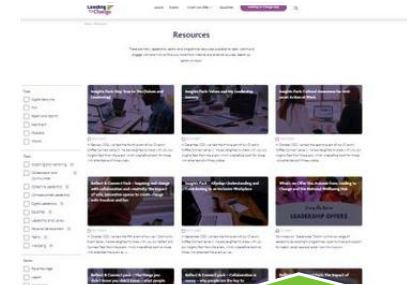
Leading to Change App



Friday Leadership Emails



Events



Resources



Awesome Cards



Programmes



Podcasts



Allyship Hub



Inclusive Leaders Hub

Click the thumbnails above to find out more or email the team: hello@leadingtochange.scot



Thank You!

