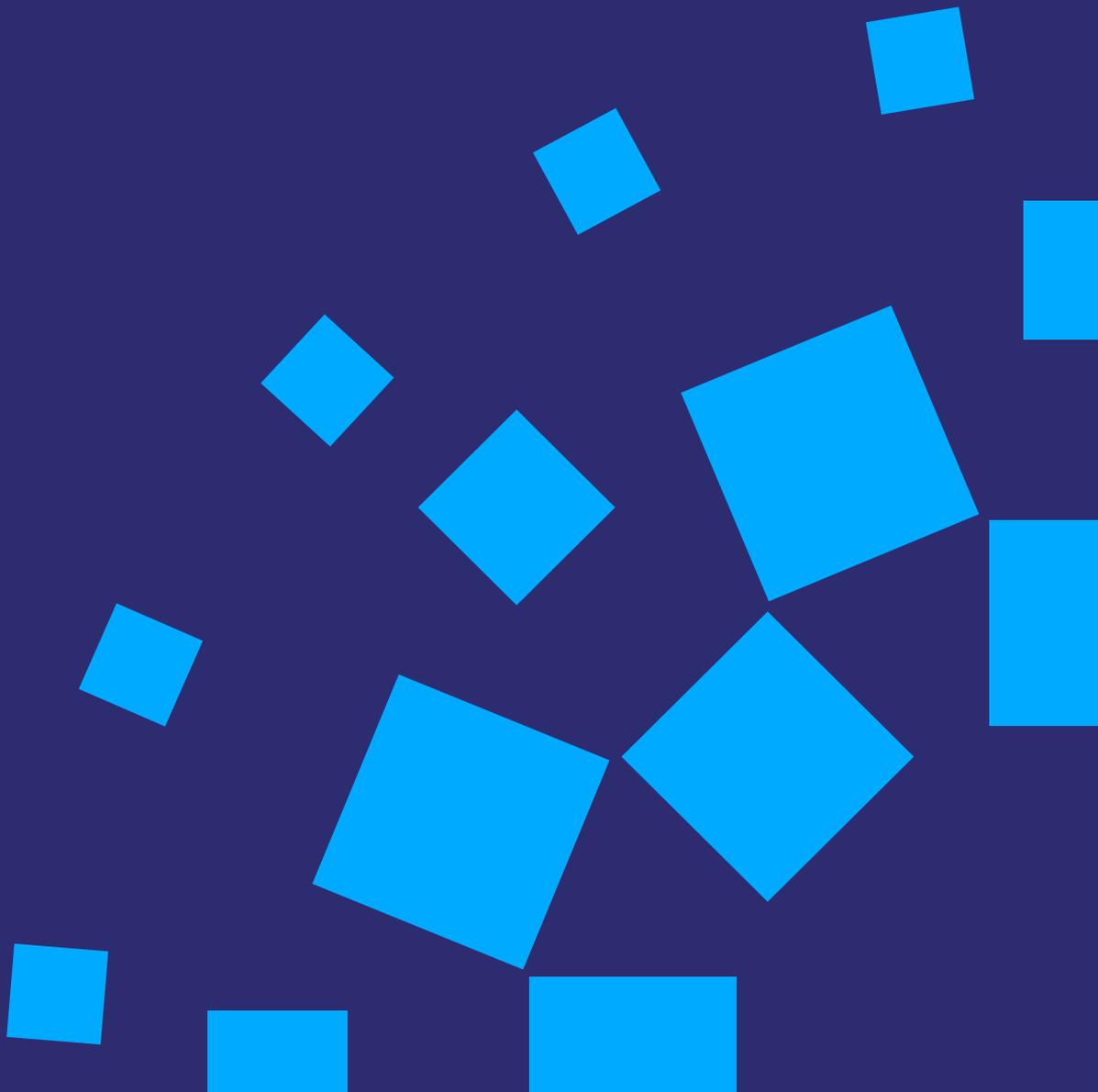




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Discovery report into workplace adjustments **2021**



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About the Police Uplift Programme

“It’s only by understanding the voice of the individual that we can truly create an inclusive culture.”

Disability staff network member

The Police Uplift Programme provides a generational opportunity to grow policing and accelerate the commitment from chief constables to build a more diverse and inclusive workforce. The Police Uplift Programme commissioned this review and supports its recommendations. It recognises that building the right leadership and culture – and having workplace adjustments in place – is essential to recruiting and retaining the best talent, enabling each person to flourish in the workplace.

Thank you to everyone who generously gave their time to complete the surveys and take part in the interviews.

The aim of this discovery report is to identify real experiences of disability and neurodiversity from officers and staff, and to use this learning to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities across all police forces.

Foreword

Deputy Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman, Gwent Police, NPCC Lead for Disability

Safe and inclusive workplaces allow us to benefit from the widest pool of talent available. Feeling appreciated and cared for is an important part of wellbeing.

Employers that value inclusivity and structured development are rewarded with the retention of hardworking and loyal staff, who use their skills and abilities to help us deliver a better service to our communities. Our challenge is to ensure that we routinely anticipate differently talented people and that we expertly accommodate people's needs as business as usual.

This discovery report clearly demonstrates that we have amazing internal officers and colleagues who have successfully navigated their own journeys with disability and neurodiversity. These people have the inside track on policing and know what is needed to create a truly inclusive workplace.

What we must do, as leaders, is listen and act on what our own people have shared with us in this discovery report. The evidence tells us that if we all understand the social model of disability – in other words, if we recognise that everyday situations can create unnecessary challenges for some people – we can change attitudes and break down the physical and organisational barriers that exacerbate those challenges.

The feedback indicates that the use of certain language, policies and process can lead to a lack of communication and an increase in employee dissatisfaction. Our colleagues' stories show us that simple adjustments can make a huge difference, empowering individuals to give their best and helping forces to build strong inclusive teams that are reflective of our communities.

To create an environment that welcomes, supports and develops colleagues, it is critical to have an engaged, informed and committed leadership team that invests in its employee networks and actively seeks to improve.

I suspect that we have many colleagues who are not yet confident enough to share the details of their disability or neurodiversity, and are therefore struggling. We will also have colleagues who have asked for help and are still struggling with policies and processes that do not serve them well.

I draw inspiration from colleagues who have shared their stories and who are being fully supported. They have proven beyond doubt that through adjustments, support and understanding, they can thrive within policing.

The key message from this report is that co-creating solutions with colleagues who have first-hand experience of these challenges is the best way to identify priorities and actions for building a sustainable disability-inclusive workplace. If we embrace the recommendations of this report, we can look towards a future where everyone can be proud of their individuality.

Preface

Kate Nash, OBE, CEO and creator of PurpleSpace

PurpleSpace were delighted to conduct this research with the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council, as part of the Police Uplift Programme.

Discovery research provides powerful insights that help organisations hear what needs to change in order to create a truly inclusive culture where colleagues living with a disability or neurodiversity can thrive.

Before deciding to share information about a disability or neurodiversity, individuals often need to make sense of these experiences for themselves, then gain the confidence to discuss their experience and/or needs with their manager in a way that is supportive and helpful.

The ease with which their employer then responds to that conversation will set the scene for an effective workplace culture. It is crucial to create a working relationship that is based on shared understanding. This can be best achieved by providing information about workplace adjustments from a position of knowledge and understanding that celebrates human difference – and specifically the talent of people with disabilities.

Anticipating people's needs requires others to listen and to act appropriately. This discovery research helps to identify how the police can build on best practice and learn from existing employee networks, to gain the skills, techniques and confidence needed to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities in practical, affordable and effective ways.

For colleagues living with a disability or neurodiversity, one of the most liberating ways to build resilience at work is by talking to others who understand and also live with a disability or neurodiversity. Networking enables people to gain tips and advice about managing an impairment or illness while delivering their day job.

The Disabled Police Association and other networks that support colleagues are vital in this process. Peer-to-peer support schemes, backed up by practical help, are an immensely valuable asset. They share expert knowledge, helpful advice and the excitement that, as the drive to recruit more officers continues, people with disabilities have a great deal to offer the Police Uplift Programme.

The colour purple is now adopted globally to provide a common connection point for the disability movement. The Department for Work and Pensions uses the term 'purple pound' to signify the collective spending power of people with disabilities, in a similar way to the 'pink pound' and 'grey pound'. A term emerging in the private sector is the 'purple passport'. #PurpleLightUp celebrates the economic empowerment of people with disabilities on 3 December every year, supporting the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

At PurpleSpace, we are on a mission to put 'purple confidence' materials into the hands of every person with a disability. We are delighted that the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing are committed to recruiting, retaining and developing people with disabilities, and we seek to develop materials that will help their colleagues every day.

Executive summary

As a key part of the Police Uplift Programme, police forces across the UK wish to take the opportunity to improve workforce representation. This includes attracting talented people who are neurodivergent or have a disability.

“Big organisations such as Microsoft and JP Morgan are actively looking to recruit people with neurodiverse talent because they see a genuine performance advantage. We need to think carefully about making our recruitment processes inclusive for everyone, or we will start to lose talent to these big companies.”

**Police Inspector Adam O’Loughlin, Avon and Somerset Police,
Head of Policy, National Police Autism Association**

If the service is to retain people with the right skills and capabilities, it is important to ensure officer and colleague wellbeing, and to support people with disabilities. The growth in officers could result in an officer turnover equivalent to a third of the service in the next three years, as well as a growth in staff, so it is important that we retain talent where possible. This will not only retain knowledge, but also reduce costs. An important part of achieving this aim will be retaining and supporting people who acquire an impairment during their employment.

“A fact I keep trying to get across is that a lot of people acquire their disability. We need to be ready to support people, we should expect to have to make adjustments, it shouldn’t come as a surprise, we need to get better and quicker at doing this.”

The National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy set an objective to advance equalities by ensuring

an inclusive and supportive workplace. The goal is to encourage a culture where people are able to be open about their neurodiversity and impairments, and to feel valued as an individual for their skills and contribution to the police service.

“We need to see the flip side of neurodiversity, not the adjustment but the strength.”

The 43-force policing model means that each chief constable has individual responsibility under the legal obligations of the Equality Act 2010 to provide workplace adjustments and to develop, evaluate and review policy. The College of Policing sets the standards for policing and provides guidance to forces operationally and in relation to workforce development.

Two challenges were identified by the College of Policing that led to this research being commissioned.

- There are currently no additional equality standards in place set by the College of Policing for colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability.
- Many forces have developed good local policies and practice in relation to the delivery of workplace adjustments, but this is not consistent across all forces and there is limited sharing of best practice.

The NPCC and the College of Policing wanted to reach out to all forces to improve their understanding of how to overcome these two challenges. The aim of this research is to learn from the experiences of officers and colleagues in relation to workplace adjustment and disability confidence (having the skills, techniques and confidence needed to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities). The objective is to use the feedback to help develop a national best-practice guide for forces to support colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability.

PurpleSpace Limited was commissioned to conduct a landscape review of existing policies and practices that support colleagues with disabilities across the police force, in order to assess good practice and to identify gaps based on information provided by the participating forces.

This discovery report sets out the findings from the review of existing approaches across the participating forces, highlights best practice and makes recommendations to help improve inclusion for colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability.

“I’ve put a lot of work into reasonable adjustments for those with dyslexia and dyspraxia and have come to the conclusion that the adjustments are tailored for general purposes, not for frontline policing. The culture is to get those with dyslexia etc to conform to the way ‘we’ do things, when in fact they need to find their own way and will perform better doing things in a way that suits the way they think and learn, but it takes a lot of understanding from a supervisor/supervisory team to allow this. Extra time may be needed and methods that might be a bit out of the ‘norm’, which as police, we don’t like apparently! This is still in its infancy; we brought all our officers with dyslexia together so they can support each other and decide if and how they would like to address the rest of the team with how they work to help them cope with the anxiety of being thought of as ‘rubbish’ or ‘lazy’.”

A key insight from this research is that it validated the two challenge areas initially set out by the College of Policing. The findings clearly demonstrate that knowledge, experience and capability in relation to disability and neurodiversity varies considerably across the participating forces. Some forces already have well-established networks, are at level 3 Disability Confident Leader status, have a Disability Passport in place, and have great processes and support for colleagues. Other forces are just starting out on their journey to improve disability inclusion. The

research found great examples of best practice within some police forces, as well as worrying levels of inconsistency, a lack of support and poorly resourced networks in others. The challenge is sharing, and embedding, a national best-practice approach so that everyone benefits.

This discovery report uses verbatim quotes from respondents to evidence everyday experiences. These are given in speech marks throughout the report.

The report aims to highlight, and focus on, the challenges that officers and colleagues face where best practice has not yet been adopted. It is hoped that this report is, in itself, a learning tool. It aims to share key insights, make recommendations based on best practice, and suggest ways forward to accelerate achieving disability confidence in a consistent national approach. Where appropriate, information has been included to help explain particular issues to help supplement the research findings.

Introduction

**Detective Inspector Jamie Mills, Disability Network Co-Chair,
Essex Police, PurpleSpace Ambassador**

The implementation of workplace adjustments is often the key to unlocking the true potential and impact of people with disabilities. This applies to policing, as it does to any other profession.

However, the effectiveness of adjustments can often be marred if the process isn't smooth and simple. Individuals can be left feeling 'battle-weary' from having to fight for simple, cost-effective changes to overcome barriers to performing their role. Policing is a profession full of resilient and resourceful people, but we must remember that people who are neurodivergent or have a disability may need adjustments to empower and facilitate them to perform at their very best.

We must therefore develop the effectiveness of the process to request and implement workplace adjustments, by drawing on the first-hand experience of peers and colleagues, and by truly understanding the needs of officers and staff who are neurodivergent or have a disability. The resources to do this are already available to us in our Disability and Carers support networks (employee resource groups). These have been playing a significant part in helping officers and staff to identify the adjustments they need to overcome workplace barriers and to have the confidence to request them.

Disability support networks in forces across the country are already sharing the skills, techniques and confidence needed to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities. These include raising awareness of workplace adjustments and ensuring that these are applied in recruitment interviews and in the workplace, so that individuals are able to conduct their job better.

It is becoming less unusual to see, for example, a project manager who is diagnosed with autism advancing their career through simple adjustments during a selection interview, or a frontline officer with an abdominal stoma who can quickly return to frontline duties with the purchase of bespoke protective equipment. These are just two good examples of how we can make the best use of our talented people by providing the necessary adjustments.

We must continue to draw on the experiences of officers and colleagues to ensure that adjustments are easily available for all.

The insights presented in this discovery report, along with the recommendations, create a strong roadmap to help all forces to become exemplar employers for talented people who are neurodivergent or have a disability.

Findings

The following gives a summary of the key themes that emerged from the research.

Leadership

Leadership is a key influencing factor in driving disability inclusion and creating the right culture. The findings strongly suggest that it is vital to have engaged visible leadership to ensure that disability inclusion is given effective support and resource. The words ‘visibility’ and ‘genuine understanding’ were used frequently in relation to how the chief constable and deputy chief constables drove forward a culture of inclusion.

“We have a fantastic chief constable and deputy chief constable. Their arrival made all the difference. I have been trying for years to get better support and raise awareness of disability but couldn’t get real traction. They don’t just give us lip service; they are really visible in their support for our network.”

Employee networks

Employee networks are the key to driving local engagement. The networks are seen in many cases by colleagues as the ‘go-to resource’, much more so than formal routes using Occupational Health and Human Resources. Where there was evidence of an effective network, that force was more likely to have a level 2 or 3 Disability Confident status and a Disability Passport in place. Those forces who have achieved level 3 Disability Confident Leader status all have an effective network in place and have a named senior sponsor. The evidence suggests that the employee network drives good communication and raises awareness, more so than formal training routes or official communication. From the responses, it would appear that all forces have an employee network

in place, but some networks have very low membership and/or are poorly resourced. There was no apparent central database of networks and network members. Some forces have several networks to support disability and neurodiversity. Empowering networks and coordinating their efforts would create greater collaboration and sharing of best practice.

“I feel that the only people who care about disabled colleagues are people with disabilities. On the whole the organisation seems to want to do the right thing but are let down by individuals who have little knowledge on the subject and do not seem to care. If it wasn't for 'Enable' I don't think I would have got the help I needed and probably would have resigned.”

However, it was also noted that employee networks need more support, as these are run by volunteers. There was evidence that volunteers can work up to eight hours a month on network duties, but that this was felt to be insufficient given the rising demand for help and the lack of formal support. It was also felt that training was needed to help ensure that the networks were managed effectively by knowledgeable people. It was felt that the networks work hard to help raise the profile of disability and neurodiversity, but that they could do a lot more if they had some central best-practice advice that they could draw on.

“Just having a network itself is not enough, it needs to be an effective network. It can't just be run by enthusiastic people. The network needs funding and expertise.”

Culture

Culture within a force was highlighted as one of the main barriers to full inclusion. Strong views were expressed that the force should move its approach to workplace adjustments away from focusing on barriers to focusing on enablers. A consistent theme was to move the culture away from the procedural wording of 'reasonable adjustments' (which was often perceived as being a 'benefit') to instead take a more human-centric approach, and to use the popular and modern language of 'workplace adjustment'. A consistent theme was that the police need to look at the whole approach, creating a more comprehensive disability strategy. The strategy should be all-encompassing, including physical building access, inclusive design, working practices and connection to the public, to ensure that disability and neurodiversity are widely understood.

“Reasonable adjustments are something the organisation has to wake up to. The tried (tired!) and tested adjustments are not really applicable, and we have to be braver in terms of what is offered to an individual. We have to change our thinking and challenge our own perceptions.”

Social model of disability

The social model of disability, and the language used to raise knowledge and understanding about disability and neurodiversity, was felt to be of utmost importance for engagement and driving a culture change. A strong, frequently raised issue was the tendency to revert back to the medical model (especially when considering the options for workplace adjustments) for deciding what support was needed.

The Workplace Adjustment Passport concept is designed to focus on enabling conversations, but it was felt that in some cases, even the passports asked for medical referrals when that often yields very little helpful information. There were many comments shared via the written surveys about language, attitudes and culture that focused on what people with disabilities cannot do, what the barriers were and the fact

that attitudes still created a stigma around a person's impairment. A strong theme was that more should be done to show how environmental barriers and attitudes have an impact on people.

Feedback suggested shifting the focus in the policy wording away from identifying barriers to a more enabling approach. This would ensure that the police service routinely anticipates differently talented people and that all forces expertly accommodate people's needs as business as usual.

“When I was first diagnosed, I didn't know what reasonable adjustments I needed. I think someone is working on a bank of examples now, which will be very useful. The NPAA [National Police Autism Association] web forums were useful for ideas and the staff association was very useful for advice on completing the process. We now have a dedicated reasonable adjustments officer which is great – that wasn't the case when I first started a passport document. On a negative, the force still talks about medical issues rather than social aspects of disability despite having a passport and it can be hard to get official support, eg, occupational health, for non-medical conditions.”

Line managers

Line managers play a pivotal role in an employee's experience and in creating the workplace culture. They are informed when an employee returns to work, when they need adjustments and when flexibility is called for. It is these line managers' responses, and their continued action, that define the confidence, productivity and feeling of self-worth of colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability. A review of the training available for frontline supervisors, middle managers and

senior leaders focused heavily on the public sector equality duty and the legal obligations as an employer. Feedback from the surveys suggest that while training provision offers legal guidance, it does little to raise awareness of how to discuss workplace adjustments and how to support the individual who has a disability or neurodiversity.

“To be fair, I don’t think it is the line manager’s fault. I don’t think they get enough training and awareness. The training they get just reinforces the culture that it’s about what is the minimum they have to provide and what is reasonable. My manager just didn’t know about my neurodiversity or how to help me.”

Diversity and inclusion strategies

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies are in place. There is a national strategy, but it is less clear how each force aligns to the national goals. In the written surveys, awareness was good, among both Human Resource leads and network members, that there was a D&I strategy in place. However, awareness about how these strategies included disability and neurodiversity as specific issues was much lower. The findings suggest that awareness around neurodiversity is much lower than awareness around disability. Some of the D&I strategies reviewed did not specifically mention disability or neurodiversity. However, there are really good examples of D&I strategies. Avon and Somerset Police have published a D&I strategy that sets out the leadership commitment and objectives on culture and inclusivity, and makes the connection with community engagement. This report puts the emphasis on neurodiversity and seeks to elevate awareness so that it has equal focus with the wider terminology of disability.

“Please help raise awareness around neurodiversity/autism. Managers/staff [and] those in positions of responsibility don’t get it.”

In the written survey to HR leads, the majority of respondents (92%, 35) stated that their force did have a D&I strategy. Just under half of the D&I strategies (44%, 17) did make reference to disability and neurodiversity. However, a third of these high-level strategies only referenced disability, with (18%, 7) responding that the D&I strategy did not reference either disability or neurodiversity.

“Disability feels a bit like Cinderella. I don’t think it gets enough traction compared to gender. The D&I stuff I have seen is always about the #MeToo campaign and #BlackLivesMatter. Of course, these are important, but it does feel that disability is not the focus of the D&I strategy.”

Workplace adjustments

Workplace adjustment policies had good awareness levels, with 85% of HR respondents stating that their force did have specific guidance on workplace adjustments. However, 65% of network members answered that there was limited understanding of the adjustment approach. Only 31% of network members thought that the workplace adjustment policies were accessible. Findings suggest that although policies are in place, it was not always easy to find out what adjustments could be made. This was especially true for people who had recently become aware of their disability or neurodiversity and who themselves had little, or no, knowledge of what workplace adjustments could be made.

“Yes, we have a policy, but this is the wrong question. You should be asking, ‘Do managers know how to use the policy?’ which they often don’t.”

Mutuality

The research findings demonstrate the need for clear expectations on both sides, as well as the need to take the onus off those with personal experience of disabilities and neurodiversity having to ask continually for 'help'. The findings emphasised that this concept, which can be referred to as 'mutuality', should be embraced and become the foundation for the working culture across all police forces. The interviews highlighted the win-win result of this mutual understanding. If a colleague was supported to work to the very best of their ability, then the service automatically benefited from increased productivity and loyalty. It was felt that policies, especially in relation to attraction and recruitment, needed to build in inclusion rather than expecting candidates to ask for help. Inclusion by design should become the standard methodology of work.

“It would be helpful to be linked into a positive approach to promoting working opportunities and adjustments to make the most of our workforce, rather than exploring and imposing restrictions, surely it's a win-win. If I can work better, then my colleagues and the force benefits, not just me.”

Workplace Adjustment Passports

The Workplace Adjustment Passport approach was felt to be a really positive enabler of the idea of mutuality, to help move forward to this more constructive approach based on shared understanding. Having a passport in place facilitated helpful conversations on what was needed to enable a more beneficial working culture. In all, 28 examples of passports were shared by respondents to the HR survey, while 11 forces stated they did not have a Workplace Adjustment Passport in place. Awareness of the passport scheme was high among network members and it was felt to be an extremely positive approach.

There was no single template for a passport. Some used the template provided by the Business Disability Forum, while other forces created their own. A few examples of passports asked questions that required medical referrals. The findings clearly show that the use of a passport is incredibly helpful, but a reminder is needed about the principles of the Workplace Adjustment Passport, as well as a standard template to ensure that all officers and colleagues have the same experience.

“Having a Disability Passport is really helpful. You feel like you don’t have to keep explaining yourself but at the same time you feel that any questions asked are of real value to help you give your best [...] [No-one] wants to feel they are letting their force down, I just need a bit of support.”

There was, however, also a strong feeling that in some forces, the provision of workplace adjustments can be seen as a ‘perk’ or ‘benefit’, which had the effect of singling the individual out for special treatment. Reference was often made to the culture in a force driving this behaviour. Although the use of the Workplace Adjustment Passport was really welcomed, it was not seen as business as usual in some forces. The name of the ‘Disability Passport’ was also challenged by some. Feedback given in the written survey suggested that the passport excluded neurodiversity. One comment also talked about people with a neurodiversity not seeing themselves as having a disability, and therefore the name of the passport was seen as unhelpful.

“My line manager actually said to me, ‘But if I let you have this kind of chair, everyone will want one and we can’t afford it, so it’s not reasonable for me to buy one just for you.’”

Reliable resources

Reliable resources were also highlighted as being essential for raising awareness about disability. It was felt that forces needed to make sure that any information that is available to colleagues comes from reputable reliable sources – for example, information on dyslexia could be produced in collaboration with the British Dyslexia Association. Seven different leaflets and bulletins on dyslexia were reviewed as part of this research. All were different and offered different advice and guidance. It was felt that this was one area that could be supported more centrally, possibly by the Disabled Police Association. One idea that was suggested was to create a central hub of reliable information that could be consistently used across all forces. Engagement was felt to be delivered best at a local level, safe in the knowledge that activity was being based on national best practice and reliable guidance.

“I have seen some information leaflets put out by other forces and have worried that these might not be written in the best way. We should ensure that information we share as networks comes from reliable sources and can be verified and backed up by real expertise.”

Language

Terminology varies considerably across the forces. For example, looking at the passport idea, terms used include ‘reasonable adjustment policy’, ‘disability passport’, ‘workplace adjustment’, ‘workplace support’, ‘supportive adjustment and wellbeing’, and ‘tailored adjustment programme’. All terms are appropriate and correct, and it is currently within the gift of each police force to use terminology that it believes is best. However, this approach has created inconsistency across forces. The challenge in this situation comes when officers and colleagues change roles and move to a different force. It would appear that forces with a stronger maturity model on disability inclusion apply the social model of disability more, and lean towards supporting and enabling

language. Where forces do not have a strong network, they tend to lean towards more procedural language and default back to the medical model. This linked to the language of ‘reasonableness’, with the preferred language being ‘workplace adjustments’ and ‘Workplace Adjustment Passport’.

“There is absolutely no consistency across the force in regard to day-to-day support for officers, a postcode lottery based on the knowledge of the supervisor (mostly sergeants) exists and this simply isn’t fair.”

Training and awareness

Training and awareness offered to all levels of management was felt to be limited in both impact and effectiveness. A great deal of reference was made to training focusing too much on the equality duty and on legal definitions of what is, or is not, reasonable. Many people thought that the available training was not well attended or was seen as a ‘tick-box’ exercise. There was a view that diversity training did not do enough to explain the social model of disability and that all too often, disability awareness was skipped over within a wider training course on diversity. It was also felt that the subject matter covered was not sufficient. In particular, people felt there was little awareness training on neurodiversity. Feedback on disability awareness training was mixed, with 34% of HR leads stating that disability awareness was not available.

“There is a complete misunderstanding of what reasonable adjustments are used for by senior managers. My manager referred me back to the force doctor to ask him how many more ‘reasonable adjustments’ he would have [to] make as he thought changing my shift pattern was the ‘tipping point’ after I had suffered a stroke. Even the doctor was astounded

by the complete lack of understanding, by the manager, of my condition.”

Disability Confident

The Disability Confident scheme was well known. Most forces had Disability Confident status, and awareness of the government’s framework was very good. Five forces have achieved level 3. Most forces were at level 2, with some forces still at level 1. The challenge is that level 1 and 2 can be achieved via filling out a simple form with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Level 3, however, requires much greater transparency and commitment. This level requires validation and good data evidence. Given the high public profile of the police, some respondents felt that level 3 should be a mandatory goal of the D&I strategy and a personal commitment of the chief constable.

“It wasn’t easy to achieve level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. But it’s not meant to be. And it meant that we were all the prouder when we did get it. What’s powerful is that it has to be validated, so disabled people have to agree [with] everything you are saying.”

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity was highlighted by many as being an important issue. A few forces were setting a high bar for best practice and had specialist leads to help with autism, dyslexia and ADHD. A few forces have excellent support in place to help with dyslexia. Other forces, however, had very little awareness in this area. Several interviewees specifically stated that they had been diagnosed with their neurodiverse condition later on life and some people had only been diagnosed very recently. In these instances, the individual was not only grappling with new information about themselves, but was also trying to have conversations

with colleagues who had very limited awareness of what neurodiversity means. One interviewee reported that their force specifically excluded neurodiversity from the Workplace Adjustment Passport process. The NPAA was referenced by several people as being an excellent resource and network.

The research clearly identifies that the police service has access to its own experts and already has best-practice roadmaps that could be more widely shared.

“I think neurodiversity is the new kid on the block. If I didn’t know I had autism then it’s hardly fair to say my manager should know. What is important now is that we start to build this into our approach to inclusion, starting by acknowledging it in the D&I strategy.”

Attraction and recruitment

Recruitment accessibility and inclusion was emphasised frequently. Several barriers were mentioned, and several people thought that getting senior officers and HR to see the benefits of inclusive recruitment was a challenge. A few examples were shared about how the interview process was just screening out talented people who are neurodiverse, because those people simply could not give their best in the selection process.

Suggestions were made for ensuring that role descriptions are as clear and concise as possible, avoiding jargon. The point was also made that this is likely to benefit all applicants. It was pointed out that standard job adverts made reference to things like ‘excellent communication skills’ as ‘must-haves’, and that this kind of language could dissuade talented applicants. For example, autistic people, who are likely to be very literal thinkers, may be discouraged from applying, as may dyslexic people, who may fear the requirements for written communication skills.

An example of a straightforward adjustment was being given time to absorb interview questions, and having questions asked in the same

sequence, which can be beneficial for individuals with dyslexia and other neurodiversity. In fact, this could be beneficial universal practice, meaning that an interview is no longer a test of recall speed. It is about recruiting the best people for the job, not the person who might interview well. However, this simple adjustment had to be fought for and several layers of managers had to be convinced of the merits. This is where the concept of inclusive design would be very powerful.

“Young individual with autism kept failing interviews due to his semantic pragmatic disorder and language disability. After 9 interview attempts, it was agreed he should be given a working interview, an on-the-job trial for 3 months, where he proved his ability to undertake the work.”

Best practice

Best practice is certainly embedded in some forces. The structure is also there to enable learning to be shared with national networks such as the Disabled Police Association and the NPAA, which could help disseminate information. While there are good examples of guides and videos, these are not always drawn upon by all forces. Many interviewees felt that now was a good time to create a coherent, joined-up network that was centrally funded and had access to central resources. This could include a central fund for adjustments, a central hub for knowledge guidance, and a central support approach for ICT accessibility and usability, with support delivered at a local level. Awareness training and learning was felt to be delivered best at a local level, using networks where engagement and personal stories would be most impactful.

The 2020 Top 50 UK Employers List has West Midlands Police placed second in a table that includes some of the country’s leading companies and public-sector bodies.

Data analytics

Data analytics is sparse on disability, neurodiversity and workplace adjustments. There was little evidence of good records on how much time and money is invested in providing adjustments or on how much employment tribunals cost. There was also little understanding of measuring the impact, success and effectiveness of adjustments.

Employee data was also limited, meaning that there was not enough information to be meaningfully analysed. Lack of data slows down learning and prevents tracking analysis, which can help inform training and awareness. This lack of data also makes it difficult to set budgets and forecast spending on workplace adjustments. In the HR written survey, 76% of respondents felt that they did not have enough data to understand disability and neurodiversity fully. Some forces have included questions in their staff survey. For example, Avon and Somerset Police asked about neurodiversity for the first time, with slightly over 1% of colleagues indicating that they had a neurodiverse condition. Capturing data on disability and neurodiversity must be a credible and authentic process that creates a culture based on trust and mutuality. The issue of data capture should be explored further. Learning could be gained from capturing central data on employment tribunals and costs of workplace adjustments.

“Disability is the forgotten protected characteristic. Over 60% of my force’s employment tribunals account for disability (reasonable adjustments denied). We don’t seem to learn. I have at least 3 cases that are so similar I could just swap out the person’s name.”

Budget

Budget was mentioned frequently as a challenging issue. Some believed costs played a strong influencing role over the purchasing decisions for workplace adjustments. Interviewees found it hard to put a ‘business case’ together to justify investment. Several interviewees who were

directly involved in purchasing workplace adjustments felt that there should be a national centralised approach to managing workplace adjustments. This would help with data collection, sharing equipment, improving purchasing power and budget allocation. Of the respondents to the HR survey, 52% stated that the budget for workplace adjustments was centrally funded in their force, 31% stated that it was managed within departmental budgets, and 13% worryingly stated that they did not know. In all, 50% of respondents felt that the budgetary process could be improved to help better support workplace adjustments.

“It shouldn’t come down to costs, but it does. Line managers have to fund the costs of equipment and they don’t always see the benefits.”

Access to Work

Access to Work was mentioned by a few interviewees. The scheme did not seem to be widely understood. It was specifically mentioned in a few policies on workplace adjustment, for example, by West Midlands Police. There did not seem to be easily accessible data on how many grants had been applied for, and for what type of adjustments had been implemented. Several interviewees stated that Access to Work was not always helpful, as the assessors didn’t really understand the police, especially when recommending ICT solutions. When asked about Access to Work, a few interviewees said that they used it a lot more for expensive adjustments.

“There’s been some resistance to it recently, as an organisation the size of Sussex Police is expected to fund the first £1,000 of any adjustments, and with the number of individuals who are applying for Access to Work assessments, it’s proving costly! However, we’re still doing it because it’s the right thing to do. We have even set up a new working

group looking at all the adjustments/resources recommended by Access to Work to gain some consistency in what is being provided, ie, many different pieces of software that all do the same thing, whilst only some are compatible with our systems. I think the £1,000 ‘excess’ as I call it, may be putting many off using it. If something costing less than £1,000 is required, it’s usually quicker and simpler to simply purchase it directly, rather than waiting for the assessment, then waiting for the report, then going through the various procurement processes in place, etc.”

Jennifer Holloway, Chair of EnAble (Sussex Police Disability and Carers Association), National Secretary for the Disabled Police Association

ICT workplace adjustments

ICT workplace adjustments were specifically mentioned by some as a particularly challenging area for the police force, with the added complexity of maintaining security. Access to Work funding was mentioned as not being available for older software. The long adoption process for additional software and compatibility with internal systems was challenging. It was felt that accessibility of systems was a real knowledge gap in workplace adjustment policies. Although one force did have an ICT accessibility advisor, this was not commonplace. This issue has been recognised and the National Enabling Programme is looking into accessible ICT. It was felt that accessible ICT should become a national project to reduce the requirement for each force to complete the same piece of compliance work (for example, when buying licences for assistive technology tools such as Dragon, JAWS and Dolphin). It was felt that the process for acquiring accessible ICT was very lengthy and involved several steps, which could result in unacceptable time delays in providing a workplace adjustment.

“Forces are all at different stages in the digital accessibility journey, many having made their own way through necessity rather than through guidance.”

Building access audits

Building access audits were also highlighted as something that should be proactively managed, as inclusive design would mean that some workplace adjustments would automatically be in place. Examples include being able to dim the lights and have quiet workspaces available. It was suggested that building design audits should be compiled and rolled out by building management, supported by the networks, to get accessibility designed into all buildings.

“Understanding of disability and reasonable adjustments in my experience is very poor, wheelchair users are often overlooked for access to buildings, meeting rooms, height of switches, door handles, sinks, toilet roll dispensers etc. [There is] limited or no engagement with users to scope any reasonable adjustments, and often consultants are used who do not have a disability or experience of disability. This leaves staff feeling devalued. There is no policy for disability / reasonable adjustments and reference is always made to the Equality Act, which managers will not read or will be unable to interpret. In my experience only lip service and the bare minimum awareness is provided to be able to tick a box.”

Conclusion

The discovery research has found compelling evidence of best-practice approaches. There are standout people who have had the courage to share their own story to help drive change for others. These people have their own experience and knowledge of the operational aspects of policing. They are true change agents who the police service should listen to and embrace.

The employee networks are by far the best way to engage and promote awareness. More force lead support for networks is needed. Network leaders would benefit from training and advice on how to run a successful network. More time to run the networks would be a huge motivating factor for the people involved. Demand is growing from individuals who need support with managing disability and neurodiversity, and with applying for workplace adjustments. Given that the Police Uplift Programme is looking to increase the number of people recruited who have a disability and/or neurodiversity, there is a concern that the networks will become overloaded with work. The College of Policing should look to support the networks.

Best-practice approaches to policies on workplace adjustments already exist. These need formalising into a national standard and adopted by all forces. Work is underway with the National Enabling Programme and the National ICT Accessibility Working Group (NICTAWG), and this research highlighted the necessity to support colleagues who need accessible ICT. This work would benefit from a national approach, drawing on best practice to create an accessibility hub. This would enable colleagues to visit a centre of excellence to try out software and receive training.

Recommendations for improving training and awareness would be to help the networks to drive learning, using natural storytellers and champions. Individuals should be supported via the networks, to help increase individuals' confidence to manage their adjustment needs. Formal training programmes were reported to be less effective and poorly attended. The most effective approach at helping to raise understanding of disability and neurodiversity is to engage people, share stories and make the concept of workplace adjustment real, by showing how an inclusive culture will benefit the police service.

The police service has all the assets that it needs to become an exemplar employer nationwide. If every force used the Disability Confident Leader framework, supported by the chief constable with an empowered and well-resourced network, then the goal to advance equalities by ensuring an inclusive and supportive workplace could be achieved.

“I feel like I fail people on a daily basis because of a lack of time and mostly, I have to teach myself along the way if there is something new.”

Recommendations

	Summary insight	Recommendation
1	<p>Leadership: Visibility and engagement on disability and neurodiversity inclusion varies across forces. Where the leaders show genuine understanding, and are seen to listen and engage with colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability, those forces are more likely to have an effective network and to have achieved level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. Bottom-up engagement helps to embed inclusion, but this needs very strong top-down leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ College of Policing to develop a model for 'listening groups' to be made available to forces, to enable the leadership to listen and engage with colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability, to hear the barriers and enablers people face at work. ■ Chief constables to commit to working towards and achieving Disability Confident Leader Level 3 status. ■ All forces to have a named senior champion leading on disability, neurodiversity and workplace adjustment.

Summary insight	Recommendation
<p>2 Employee networks: The motivation within the employee networks is the true engine behind disability confidence in a police force. Some networks are well resourced, while others are struggling with workload. Some are very effective, while others are just starting to develop.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The NPCC Equality Lead to review the funding and support strategy for employee networks.■ The College of Policing to develop training to build the capability of networks to be effective.■ The College of Policing to develop an Employee Network Leaders learning group to share knowledge■ Chief constables to develop local mechanisms to bring networks into the decision-making process to support the design of their workplace adjustment approach and passport.

Summary insight	Recommendation
<p>3 Culture: Attitudes at work play a large role in creating barriers and enablers for disability inclusion. How the provision of workplace adjustment is perceived is vital. An inclusive culture will enable all colleagues to bring their authentic self to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Forces and NPCC Communications to consider how best to use storytelling to enable greater understanding and awareness to help break down a culture of stigma and misunderstanding.■ The NPCC Disability Lead to develop a national communication strategy to ensure wider awareness of the Disabled Employee Networks, Disability Confidence Scheme and the Workplace Adjustment Passport.■ Forces to develop local communications plans to ensure that all employees know that support is available and where to go to get the right support within their force.■ Forces to adopt the Safe to Say campaign to encourage and build confidence for those with a disability to record their personal data.

	Summary insight	Recommendation
4	<p>Language: Varies considerably across the police force. Using language that is more inclusive moves the culture away from seeing people with disabilities as not being able to do the job, towards a positive enabling approach that focuses on barriers and not the individual. The language of ‘reasonableness’ is felt to be a hindrance. The focus should be on what an individual needs in order to work to the best of their ability. Language must also be inclusive of neurodiversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forces and the College of Policing to adopt consistent language supporting people who are neurodivergent or have a disability. It is recommended to use the term ‘workplace adjustment’ in place of ‘reasonable adjustment’. ‘Workplace Adjustment Passport’ is the recommended name as the national standard for the disability passport.
5	<p>Social model of disability: Colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability understand the language of social inclusion. This approach underpins how the culture in the police force can become truly inclusive, yet it is not widely understood by all colleagues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NPCC Disability Lead to ensure that the national communications strategy includes the social model of disability. This focuses on enablers and removing barriers, rather than on the person’s impairment or neurodiversity. It shifts the focus away from the individual asking for help to creating an inclusive culture for everyone.

	Summary insight	Recommendation
6	<p>Workplace adjustments: The process for applying for, and receiving, support is very well understood in some forces. However, ease of access to the process is not the same across all forces and many feel that there is limited understanding of the workplace adjustment process. The majority of respondents indicated that the budgetary process could be improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Forces to review the processes in place locally to access adjustments and funding, and to ensure that they are accessible and efficient. ■ The NPCC Disability Lead to scope how a centralised national approach to funding and accessing workplace adjustments and centralised funding could support efficiency, effectiveness and shared learning to present to chief constables. ■ The NPCC Disability Lead to scope measures that would enable greater local or national oversight and understanding of the adjustments in place, as well as greater speed of support.
7	<p>Training and awareness: Focuses on the legal equality duty and the definitions and legal application of 'reasonable' adjustment. Training tends not to include how to create an inclusive disability confident culture and does not cover the social model of disability. Feedback suggested that not all line managers had completed awareness training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The College of Policing to create information guides on equality duty and workplace adjustments that can be easily accessed as reference material, as and when needed (eg, video tutorials). These should focus on awareness raising to 'helpful to know guides' and 'listening groups', with tailored information that is accessible as and when people need to know.

	Summary insight	Recommendation
8	<p>Reliable resources: Having good advice available helps raise awareness and helps people understand what support could be available. This is especially helpful for new diagnoses and to help with decision making. All information should be reliable and consistent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The College of Policing to create and maintain a national resource of learning ‘helpful to know’ guides on impairments, neurodiversity and workplace adjustments, to drive a more consistent approach across all forces. These should centre on real people and focus on storytelling. They should be accessible to all forces and every member of staff.
10	<p>Line managers: The line manager plays an essential role in supporting colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability. A good line manager who is disability confident delivers a strong supportive working environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The College of Policing to review current material and ensure that line managers have access to relevant and timely information that guides them on how best to support colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability (eg, ‘helpful to know information’).

	Summary insight	Recommendation
11	<p>Workplace Adjustment Passport: The use of a 'passport' is strongly welcomed by individuals and is seen as having a positive impact that helps employee who are neurodivergent or have a disability to have greater confidence in managing their support needs. The approach in some forces feels procedural and not well understood, and there is a lack of consistency across all forces. Make the language attractive to neurodiverse people who may not define themselves as having a disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The College of Policing to share a good practice approach to a passport, moving the language away from 'procedure', 'reasonableness' and 'adjustment' to inclusive language that is seen as an enabler. The suggested national approach is to call these Workplace Adjustment Passports.
12	<p>Neurodiversity: Is seen as the new subject matter and is not referenced in D&I strategies. Only a few forces have begun to dedicate resources and expertise to neurodiversity. Some forces are exemplars and are delivering real efficiencies, attracting and retaining people, transforming learning, and creating a more inclusive culture. The NPAA is an excellent resource.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Forces to review and include neurodiversity in their D&I strategies. ■ The College of Policing to share good practice and learning nationally through an accessible knowledge hub. ■ Forces to review their local recruitment processes to help attract neurodiverse talent. ■ The College of Policing to review the national selection and examination processes to assess and address any adverse impact.

	Summary insight	Recommendation
13	<p>Data capture measurement and data analytics on disability inclusion and workplace adjustments are missing in most forces. Having access to good reliable data helps drive better decision making. Currently, no data is shared nationally on the costs, types and impacts of workplace adjustments. Data on employment tribunals is not collected, so learning is not disseminated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The NPCC Disability Lead to scope and agree with chief constables national and local data that would be helpful to record and share, to support policy making and enable shared learning. This may include type, cost and impact of workplace adjustments, and complaints and employment tribunals.
14	<p>Disability Confident: only five forces had achieved level 3 Disability Confident Leader. The majority of forces had achieved level 1 and 2. However, these do not require independent verification, good data capture and visible leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chief constables to commit to working towards and achieving level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. It is recommended that all forces create a clear plan of action to achieve level 3 Disability Confident Leader status by December 2023 (if all of the above 11 actions are agreed and delivered, then all forces should be in a position to achieve level 3).
15	<p>Budget: This is managed differently across the participating forces. In some forces, it was felt that funding for disability, neurodiversity and workplace adjustments was a barrier.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The NPCC Disability Lead, with key stakeholders, to draw together a plan to achieve increased purchasing power, data analytics and sharing of software, licences and equipment across forces.

Summary insight	Recommendation
<p>16 Access to Work: This was used by some forces but was not always seen as an easy-to-use service and in some cases was not seen as applicable for the police.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The NPCC Disability Lead to scope the opportunities that a single access point for Access to Work nationally could provide, for example, a standard grant claim process and consistent support.
<p>17 ICT: 43 forces use different ICT platforms. Each force has its own method for approving accessible ICT. With the increase in web-based applications, it would be beneficial to agree on a selection of suitable web plug-ins or widgets for use on relevant applications that have been passed by security (for example, Helperbird, ATBar or Midnight Lizard).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The NPCC Disability Lead with the National Enabling Programme to agree a standard approach to testing and approving accessible ICT and scope opportunities, to collaborate on resources such as licenses.
<p>18 National resource: It was felt by many that there needs to be a funded national resource to collect data, inform learning and share best practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Disabled Police Association to create a network of network leaders. ■ The College of Policing to develop a central hub for learning and accessible resources.
<p>19 Building access audits: Limited information on building access design was available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The College of Policing to work with the NPCC Estates portfolio to review and produce guidance to forces to ensure that buildings have inclusive design for all.

Methodology

The College of Policing and PurpleSpace co-created two written surveys.

- A survey for Human Resources, Reasonable Adjustment and D&I leads was designed to capture policies and procedures on disability and neurodiversity, and to get a big picture view of awareness and approaches to providing workplace adjustments. This survey captured the name of the participating force.
- A survey for network members to capture individuals' experiences, show best practice and seek ideas for improvement. This survey was anonymous and did not capture names of individuals.

The survey was circulated on 19 January 2021 and closed on 15 February 2021.

The 43 forces in England and Wales, plus the College of Policing and British Transport Police, were contacted to take part in the HR survey. Note that several forces joined together to submit one return. The data is therefore presented as percentages from a total of 38, which represents 42 forces (including the College of Policing and British Transport Police). Three forces did not submit a return. A list of participating forces can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

In all, 600 completed surveys were received from network members.

In-depth qualitative interviews were also held in confidence with 27 people. The interviews explored the training and awareness that was offered to colleagues, with opinions sought as to the effectiveness of the approach. Ideas were sought on how training could be improved. Conversations explored approaches to communication and engagement, and focused on the culture of the police force in relation to individuals who are neurodivergent or have a disability.

In addition, 28 examples of policies and procedures relating to disability and reasonable adjustment were reviewed.

Best-practice examples that had been shared were then explored in more detail, to create short case illustrations for this discovery report.

The report uses verbatim comments and quotes throughout the findings to demonstrate the authentic voice of those people who generously gave their time to complete the survey and take part in the interviews.

Quotes have been anonymised.

The full data sets of the findings are presented in [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#).

A short headline summary was shared with the Reasonable Adjustment Group on 19 January. The findings were discussed in depth with Amanda Blakeman, Deputy Chief Constable for Gwent Police and NPCC Lead for Disability. This enabled further input, and ensured that the findings would resonate fully with police forces and would have senior accountability and ownership.

Insights

Leadership

Ben's story

Ben Forbes, Inspector, Essex Police

As a police officer with dyslexia, I wanted to tell my story about why workplace adjustments and understanding neurodiversity are so important for the police service.

I didn't do well at school. I struggled with academia and I would disengage. I didn't respond to traditional learning methods, which led me to go down the deviance route (a term I now fully understand and appreciate). I had no GCSEs and no real support.

It was only when I hit year nine in secondary school that I was placed in an 'alternative education programme'. I was able to leave the classroom environment and work in a water sports centre. This put me on the path to a successful career.

I joined the Metropolitan Police in 2013 after two attempts at their National Assessment Centre. I failed the first time due to my English and maths exercises. I had never been given assessment or indication that I had dyslexia.

In 2018, my programme director asked me if I had ever been assessed for dyslexia. I said no, due to the sheer cost (around £450-£600). She said that the university offered a support programme that funded 70% of the cost of the assessment. I took advantage of the assessment and I was formally diagnosed with dyslexia. A life-changing moment for me!

My programme director celebrated this news with me. I remember that she said, 'This will be a lifeline for you now Ben, well bloody done for taking the leap.' That then enabled a specific learning plan and adjustments to be put in place and in 2021, I formally graduated with a First-Class BSc in Policing (Hons) - wow!

There are key things that have really helped me, which - in my humble view - should be reviewed by every leader in policing to support those with neurodiversity.

Being able to discuss my dyslexia positively, being understood and being able to get help with workplace adjustments has made all the difference. I have a laptop and software to help me, and I am given extra time in examinations. These adjustments are not massive for the force, but they are a massive help to me. I struggle with time management, so being able to plan with colleagues is a big help. These are little adjustments that make me an effective officer. What makes the difference is being able to share my story with colleagues and have their support.

Policing needs to understand barriers, challenges and possible differences in everyone, recognising that there are no right or wrongs. To be effective and grow as a profession, we both need each other. My plea is to enable those officers and staff to harness their strengths and get the support they need.

I've learned to value my dyslexia and see it as a strength, not a weakness. I hope that everyone in the force sees it the same way.

David's story

Sir David Thompson, Chief Constable, West Midlands Police

I am proud to lead an organisation where I believe every constable can rise to be the chief constable.

If this is to be a true aspiration, then we have to ensure that West Midlands Police is an organisation where all talent and skill is recognised, supported and enabled to thrive. We also have to recognise that people's lives can suddenly be affected by a disability and we have to be ready to accommodate people's needs.

I have seen first-hand the impact that simple cheap adaptations can make to an individual who has a disability or neurodiversity. When Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson was diagnosed with motor neurone disease, we were determined to help him stay in the role he loved, having served 28 years. The adjustments he needed included flexible working hours, remote working from home and helping his colleagues to understand how best to manage meetings.

Our EnAble Disability and Carers' Community had been working hard to raise awareness and move our working practices forward to ensure that we could respond in the right way. Having a knowledgeable staff

network in place and good working practices made all the difference.

One of the things that I know works well is having the Workplace Adjustment Passport. It's a simple approach that enables an honest discussion about a person's disability and what they need to do their job.

I believe that there is a much better, more open approach to disability across policing than there has been in the past. There have been some terrific national campaigns about hidden illness, particularly mental health, which is helping to change the culture to one where people are much more willing to come forward and ask for help.

I know we have more to do. I want to see a culture where it is safe for everyone to be open about their disability or neurodiversity, where the organisation can swiftly and effectively put support in place, and where inclusion is designed into the way we run our police service.

Discussion

“For me it's all about how leadership views this issue. If inclusion doesn't have visible support right from the top, the whole thing just gets lost in process and isn't given priority, that's why decisions on providing adjustments can just get lost in the weeds and take weeks, because we don't have authority to make basic decisions.”

Leadership engagement and commitment stood out as a key theme that had an impact on the effectiveness of disability inclusion in the police force. Interviewees either spoke in very positive terms about their leadership engagement or were concerned about how to engage senior leaders and how to secure visible commitment for disability awareness.

“Having an engaged chief constable is brilliant, they really listen, they take the time to understand, and it makes colleagues feel more involved.”

Similar opinions emerged during discussions about how leadership views disability and inclusion in terms of operational importance.

In some forces, the staff networks had direct access to senior leaders and were able to give examples of leadership support. This gave credibility, helped to raise visibility and gave a sense of importance to awareness campaigns. In some forces, it was less easy to gain traction for disability and neurodiversity with the leadership.

“We are fully supported by our chief constable and deputy chief constable, and we also have an amazing Diversity Team who hold a small budget for all support networks. This means we have been able to purchase pens and tie pins and promote our logo, and also a flag which we fly during Disability History Month.”

One example that was shared by an interviewee told of how three successive changes in leadership had made an impact on the effectiveness of the disability network. Starting as a bottom-up movement, this particular force had an enthusiastic network that tried to push out communications with limited impact. This was felt to be a consequence of the past chief constable not prioritising disability. A change in leadership brought greater focus on getting the process right and helped move the disability agenda forward. A third change brought visible commitment and created a dynamic learning approach to help colleagues thrive in a more inclusive culture. Greater traction was gained, and neurodiversity was given more focus.

“Our chief constable and deputy chief constable really supported the network in applying for Level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. They were really pleased when we achieved it and saw it as a way of us leading the way.”

Other feedback cited Human Resources and Occupational Health as being seen as the policy leaders. It was felt by some interviewees

that workplace adjustment and disability inclusion were seen as the responsibility of these specialist departments and did not need additional attention from the leadership.

“I have known other staff members request reasonable adjustments and be talked about as being ‘a pain’ or ‘a nuisance’ by officers, this has put other people off requesting things they need, unfortunately this type of attitude has extended not just amongst PCs and sergeants but also higher ranks such as chief inspectors and superintendents. I have a neurodiverse issue but have only disclosed it to my manager. I would never tell other people I work with unless it was absolutely necessary. The only reason I spoke up about it in the first place was because I felt cornered by higher ranking persons and felt that I had to disclose it which made me extremely uncomfortable.”

Avon and Somerset Police demonstrate their leadership commitment. Their D&I strategy sets out a clear roadmap of objectives. It has visible leadership from senior leaders and uses the Disability Confident framework to evidence its assurance process. This force has achieved level 3 as a Disability Confident Leader and is making great progress on understanding neurodiversity. The strategy is excellent in recognising that strengthening trust, engaging the network and holding discovery workshops helps inform decision making. They have instigated community listening channels and have very active employee networks on both disability and neurodiversity.

“This is a top leadership priority for the organisation and as such it will be given regular attention by managers and leaders at all levels. It will be properly

resourced, with governance oversight at the top through an Inclusion and Diversity Board with broad representation and which I will continue to Chair. In implementing the strategy, we will be open and transparent, draw upon the evidence. We will continue to encourage scrutiny and accountability for progress. We might not always get it right – and where we don't, we will learn quickly. We will take courageous decisions and drive innovation to accelerate progress. We will adopt an approach that is both caring and supportive.”

Extract from Avon and Somerset Police leadership statement

In the private sector, best-practice examples for demonstrating leadership engagement use ‘listening groups’ to hear directly from people with disabilities about issues and solutions. Senior leaders are named champions for disability and neurodiversity.

“Listening to, and learning from, our colleagues is fundamental to our approach to improving our cultural confidence around disability and mental health. Suggestions from our listening groups have increased accessibility in the workplace and initiated new products and services.”

Ashok Vaswani CEO, Barclays UK, Global Executive Sponsor – Disability Agenda

Recommendation

Best-practice organisations have named senior champions for disability and neurodiversity who can evidence that they listen and engage directly with people to understand the barriers and enablers to inclusive employment.

Each force should name a senior leader as the disability and/or neurodiversity champion. Each should create listening groups to enable the leadership to listen and engage with colleagues who have disabilities, to hear about their challenges. The leadership team should be committed to achieving level 3 Disability Confident Leader status.

Employee networks

The EDCC's story

EnAble Disability and Carers' Community (EDCC) is a team of diverse volunteers from across West Midlands Police.

The network's passion and common purpose is to influence policy and procedure while also supporting and guiding employees. Its aim is to create a working environment to maximise staff's potential, not only for their benefit but also for the benefit of the force and the communities it serves.

Due to the work of the EDCC, West Midlands Police is now seen on a national level as a 'shining light' around disability, having recently won the coveted 'Positive Cultural Change' award in the Disability Smart Awards with the Business Disability Forum.

The other two finalists were global, multi-national organisations, which again highlights how far the force, led by the EDCC, has come.

As part of the work to promote positive cultural change, partnerships have been forged with external organisations. The network has worked with Jaguar Land Rover and DWP to complete a journey through the three levels of the Disability Confident Awards and achieved level 3 Leader status, being only the second force in the UK to obtain this level of award and the first metropolitan force.

The EDCC works alongside West Midlands Police staff who have disability, wellbeing and caring issues to identify the challenges that they encounter during their working day.

Once these have been identified, the EDCC organises consultation sessions to obtain staff-led ideas to help overcome any difficulties. It then liaises with managers and the D&I force leads to obtain feasible, simple, cost-effective and legally compliant solutions.

In the past, staff with different abilities have felt stigmatised, isolated and not valued. In some cases, this has led to absenteeism and low morale. But different abilities are now valued and welcomed, as their abilities are seen as a positive for the business.

There has also been a noticeable increase in staff members coming forward to speak about and declare the difficulties that they have previously hidden from the organisation due to fear of being isolated and excluded.

This more open and accepting atmosphere has enabled staff to feel comfortable in coming forward to share their differences and to encourage others to do the same. In turn, increased knowledge and training around disability and difference has meant that supervisors are now more comfortable in raising issues with staff that were previously left unaddressed.

Discussion

“It’s our staff network that produces the best leaflets and information sources. If I need to know anything, I go to the network first. I think this is because they care and know what it’s like. They signpost you to helpful information. I don’t find the intranet helpful at all as it is so difficult to navigate.”

Effective employee networks were seen by many as the catalyst for good communication and for driving real engagement. This seemed to come from the fact that it was people with disabilities and allies that led this work from a personal perspective. The feedback had strong views that learning from colleagues was powerful, was cost-effective and made learning more accessible and relevant.

“A few years ago, we made a video, with three of us from the EnAble Committee speaking about what support we offer. At the end of the video was a

voiceover, which said, ‘Everyone in this video has a hidden disability’. Following the video, we were inundated with enquiries from colleagues asking to join EnAble because we had highlighted hidden disabilities and because we spoke from personal experience, despite appearing non-disabled.”

The police service gets a great deal of value creation from its networks. The role that effective networks play is in providing support and practical advice about how to get the right workplace adjustment. Because the networks are run by people who have a lived experience, they can offer help in navigating the system and in completing a Workplace Adjustment Passport. Several network leaders gave feedback and it is clear that these people are change agents. They are working very hard to build a fresh narrative for the police. They are the storytellers, they are confident in their own journey and they are sharing their experience to drive change. Adam O’Loughlin, Police Inspector with Avon and Somerset, is also Head of Policy for the NPAA. He is using his personal story to raise awareness and improve understanding of how to provide effective workplace adjustments. There are many brilliant people across the police service who are using their stories to help others through the employee networks.

“When I was diagnosed it was hard to know who to talk to. The employee network really supported me. Now I am sharing my story and helping others.”

The networks use a variety of engagement tools, including YouTube videos, flyers, Yammer, awareness days, webinars and information stands. A popular approach was to invite in speakers who were experts in a particular issue to attend webinars. The communication coming from the networks also drew attention to events such as Mental Health Awareness Week and Disability History Month, to highlight the wider impact of disability and neurodiversity. Good examples of communications showed how workplace adjustments helped people by using real stories. Feedback suggests that events put together by the networks provided greater learning than the formal awareness training given to managers and supervisors.

“Our Disabled and Carers Staff Network raises support for reasonable adjustments, but it relies on individuals coming to the network to discuss issues. Despite many communications on what is on offer it often fails to land where needed most on the frontline. There is currently no Reasonable Adjustment Policy and hasn’t ever been one to the best of my knowledge. A Health Passport is due to launch but it needs a Reasonable Adjustment Policy to support it. We have a wellbeing site on the force intranet, but it does not mention reasonable adjustments.”

Awareness of staff networks on disability was good, with 81% (484) stating that they were aware of a staff network on disability. Awareness of staff networks on neurodiversity was much lower at 41% (247). Some staff networks are well established, ensuring that the social model of disability is well embedded in their communication approach. Others are just embarking on their journey and have much to learn.

“I am fortunate, I have good support, good resources and we are, I think, doing really well. There is of course more we can do but I know some smaller forces just have an uphill battle. We try to share examples but there is a bit of protectionism going on, with some forces wanting to be seen as the best. I think now is the right time to rethink creating a central resource for good practice and a central budget for things like supporting Mental Health

Awareness Week. Every force should be committed and have the same network resource.”

Feedback suggests that all forces do have an employee network for people with disabilities. However, evidence suggests that some networks have very low membership, are not well resourced and do not have a prominent role in their force. Further research is being done by the Disabled Police Association to look at the size and structure of the networks. What came across during the interviews was the desire to bring the networks together to share more learning. Cross-working groups on workplace adjustments are seen as valuable, and it was felt that more should be done to support network leaders.

Recommendation

The motivation within the employee networks is the true engine behind disability confidence in a police force. Some networks are well resourced, while others are struggling with workload. Some are very effective, while others are just starting to develop.

Create a national funding strategy for employee networks, so each has access to the same resources. Provide training on how to manage an effective network. Create a National Employee Network Leaders learning group. Bring networks into the decision-making process to drive the national templates for best practice.

Culture

Kaj's story

Kaj Bartlett, Inspector, Sussex Police

As a police officer with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), I am sharing my story to help pave the way for other officers and colleagues in the police service.

I think it is vital that the police service recognises what is happening in the private sector, where companies are starting to realise the benefits of matching neurodiverse staff with roles to which they are suited. The challenge we have to acknowledge and address is that the police culture of

'one size fits all' really limits how we tap into the potential of people whose cognitive processing and behaviours are different to the stereotypical 'norm'. Once you understand that, and look at things differently, you can start to build working practices that enable people to operate to their best. In the case of ADHD, the brain doesn't process the 'reward chemical' dopamine in the 'normal' way. Someone with the condition constantly seeks interactions and activities that secure the dopamine needed. At its worst, if not understood and managed, this can lead to increased risk-taking, impulsiveness, violence and even promiscuity. On the flipside, people with ADHD will thrive in environments which help fulfil their dopamine need.

Operational policing provides this for me, yet I find it often impossible to focus and concentrate on routine tasks, such as report writing and project work.

Prior to 2017, I had no realisation that I was living with this condition or the significant, overwhelming impact it was having on me. I began to suspect that I was living with ADHD after a series of challenging life events. I researched the condition fervently (actually using the hyper-focus trait of ADHD) and used this information to help me understand my way of being and my needs. In 2017, I had difficulty in gaining support from the force and needed to personally pay for a comprehensive private psychiatric assessment, which diagnosed me with ADHD to aid my situation.

I was able to use knowledge to get me back to an operational role and into subsequent work that plays better to my ADHD strengths and allows me to self-advocate for support for the challenges.

Securing straightforward, reasonable adjustments that work for my force and me was hugely beneficial – for them and me. As a personal snapshot, since gaining the personal understanding of ADHD – and how to live and thrive with it – I have not had any sickness absence related to mental health since 2017, compared with (cumulatively) eight months' worth between 2008 and 2017.

Society and policing have made great strides with gender, race and age discrimination, but not so much with disability – and particularly hidden disability, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia. When I went looking for somebody who understood ADHD and policing, there was nobody, so I realised that I needed to become that person and to

raise that awareness. I also personally assist officers and staff who find themselves needing support from 'someone who understands them', through my work as a Police Federation representative and an NPAA Co-ordinator in Sussex.

The emergency services offer good careers for people with ADHD who need that ongoing stimulus. They need managers who are understanding and employees who know themselves enough to be able to say, 'Yes, I can do this, I might need extra help doing that'.

Through Access to Work, I secured life-changing coaching on coping mechanisms for my ADHD. I am proof of how chief constables can save themselves a lot of money in lost productivity and sickness absences by a more progressive, inclusive and bespoke approach to neurodiversity.

Discussion

“I think there is a culture of misunderstanding in the police, that if you cannot do the job without a reasonable adjustment then you shouldn't be doing the job at all. This is grass roots up not just top down, it may just be a perception of mine, but certainly something I believe exists.”

The attitudes of leadership, line managers and colleagues were mentioned a great deal during the interviews. Several people talked about the culture creating attitudinal, behavioural and physical barriers for colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability. There was a real belief that culture creates or reinforces obstacles to employees with disabilities and has an impact on how these obstacles can be removed or overcome.

“I have had good support getting my reasonable adjustments sorted, I just needed small adjustments, noise cancelling headphones and a quieter less busy area to work from. The problem I feel is from other colleagues who don't understand and make me feel uncomfortable.”

Several interviewees felt that some people viewed workplace adjustments as a 'perk' or 'benefit'. This culture was reinforced by the language of policies and procedures that used negative language and looked at what people with disabilities cannot do.

“I have had a reasonable adjustment stopped three times now, because my DI has stated that this would not fit in line with my job role, although it would seem to me to be more of a case that they feel that if this was agreed then it would open the gate for other employees to ask for the same, which is totally unfair.”

One example shared talked about a culture of making people with disabilities feel ‘singled out’ for special treatment. A colleague had requested noise cancelling headphones and a desk in a quiet area to help reduce distractions. Instead of colleagues understanding the benefits and reason why this was of great help, jokes and comments were made. The individual felt even more isolated and excluded.

“We are dealing with a 200-year history, I am not saying it is easy, but we need to look at the culture. This means everything, how we write job adverts, attract people and how we select people. How we manage people and how we develop people. The world is different now and the police force has to be different as well.”

Demonstrating impact was suggested by several interviewees as being the most effective way of raising awareness of disability and neurodiversity. The strong feeling was that explaining workplace adjustments should be more about engagement, explanation, and demonstrating the impact and difference that they made. Many interviewees talked about the need to focus on how to enable people to focus on what they need to do their job well. Discussion raised the concern that it was too easy to focus on what people with disabilities could not do. Telling stories enabled people to explain what they needed, why they needed it and how it made a difference, helping to illustrate that it was not a benefit but a simple way to work more effectively.

“There are factors at play that won’t be cured by training. Police culture is the biggest barrier to progress in this area. It’s not about malice but we are siloed into departments and training doesn’t land with people. What matters is engaging colleagues with the human story, not the process.”

In the private sector, organisations are collaborating to ensure that people with disabilities are at the heart of designing strategies that drive an inclusive culture.

In 2014, for example, EY held its first Diverse Abilities Leadership Summit on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event was an opportunity to discuss new thinking and practices that would enable people with diverse abilities to contribute to creating high-performing organisations. This led to the creation of accessibility and inclusion plans and workplace adjustments.

“My force publishes data on gender and BAME [Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups]. No data is published on disability and neurodiversity so what does this really say about our culture? We need to get better at encouraging people to tell us about their impairment, so we have a more positive story to tell.”

Recommendation

Attitudes at work play a large role in creating barriers and enablers for disability inclusion. How the provision of workplace adjustment is perceived is vital. An inclusive culture will enable all colleagues to bring their authentic self to work.

Create a national communication strategy to ensure that every colleague in every police force is aware of their Disabled Employee Network and

Disability Confident status, aware that workplace adjustment support is available, and aware of where to go to get the right support.

Social model of disability

Information

The origins of the social model of disability are synonymous with the history of the disability rights movement. In 1975, the UK organisation called Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation said:

“In our view it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society.”

This became known as the social interpretation, or social definition, of disability. Mike Oliver, the author of ‘The Politics of Disablement’, developed this concept into the social model of disability in 1983. This model has become a widely accepted way in which people with disabilities want to be included. The mantra ‘Nothing about us without us’ is a phrase from which organisations can learn.

The message of the social model of disability is that colleagues in the police force who are neurodivergent or have a disability are in a great position to help guide and advise the organisation. An effective listening process by the leadership is needed to create an inclusive culture.

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world. It’s a way of thinking that people’s disabilities are caused by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets or stairs, or they can be caused by people’s attitudes to difference, like assuming that people with disabilities can’t do certain things.

The social model helps recognise barriers that make life harder for people with disabilities. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers people with disabilities more independence, choice and control.

For example, one police force was able to enhance the interview process for autistic and dyslexic candidates by providing the questions in advance of an interview. By giving all candidates the written questions 30 minutes before the interview, everyone was better prepared. The interviews all went very well. The purpose is to recruit the right candidates, not those people who happen to interview better.

The social model is about creating a level playing field. Often, changes can make the working environment better for all. For example, dimming the lights for an individual who is sensitive to light can make for a pleasant working environment for the whole team.

Discussion

“We need to explain the social model of disability better. We need to show it’s not about just the law and HR policy but simply how we treat people every day. I don’t think this is covered enough in training which focuses a lot on the equality duty.”

Many interviewees talked about the social model of disability. It was felt that this was not widely understood as a concept outside of the networks and by people who did not have a disability. It was also felt that this should be the focus of training and awareness, instead of the equality duty. Many people felt that it was now important for police culture to stop looking at what people with disabilities cannot do and just build in inclusive approaches that helped everyone.

“We need to focus on the barriers that exist, not the disabled person as the problem. We need to show how simple changes make a massive difference to how people work to help people give their very best.”

The social model of disability should be the framework for how communications and awareness training is presented. The model should

be business as usual and simply the day-to-day way of describing adjustments. The language used should not be trapped by definitions but enable people to have the confidence to be themselves.

“Our approach should be, ‘What can I do to make you the very best you can be at work?’ It’s about encouraging disclosure and trust; it is not about a new form and a new process. I have to say, COVID has provided the rocket fuel. Before, working from home was seen as an unfair privilege, now we are all doing it and all still being effective, so that can’t be a reason now to deny flexible working.”

In the private sector, JP Morgan’s James Mahoney, Chief Quality Officer for Mortgage Banking Technology said, ‘We have to switch our thinking’. He heads a pilot program, launched in 2015, which introduces employees on the autism spectrum into the workplace. He sees employees with autism as an unexploited talent pool. According to the programme, after three to six months working in the Mortgage Banking Technology division, employees with autism were doing the work of people who took three years to ramp up and were even 50 percent more productive.

Recommendation

Colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability understand the language of social inclusion. Although this approach underpins how the culture in the police force can become truly inclusive, it is not yet widely understood.

Promote learning on the social model of disability. Focus on enablers and removing barriers rather than the person’s impairment or neurodiversity. Shift the focus away from the individual asking for help to creating an inclusive culture for everyone.

Line managers

Discussion

“My line manager simply doesn’t understand, I don’t think he has ever done any training and I get the feeling he thinks I am just being difficult.”

Line managers were referenced frequently in the interviews as being the critical touch point to help colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability to navigate the reasonable adjustment process. Some colleagues shared stories of support and ongoing understanding. Others shared difficult stories that had resulted in a negative experience.

“I have a number of conditions that have resulted over time from an industrial accident. My line manager has always been extremely supportive and understanding and listened to how my disabilities have changed and how these changes have impacted on my home life and work life. We have discussed that whilst I am still able to work, I would like to continue in my role and additional reasonable adjustments have been added to enable this to happen. My line manager has always provided a safe environment for me to be able to approach her without ever making me feel, ‘Oh here we go again,’ and I am proud of her approach to supporting disabled staff.”

This area is one where there was the most inconsistency in feedback received. There was such mixed feedback ranging from superb examples of support to absolute failure to support. What is clear is that the role

of the line manager is vital, and this is where awareness training should be targeted.

“My direct line manager (DI, not a friend out of work) has been incredibly supportive, I can’t fault him. For the last 2.5 years he has been in regular welfare contact, easy to discuss things with, supportive and empathetic and very open to reasonable adjustments and sticks up for me in divisional Resourcing & Attendance meetings. As a result, I am at work full hours, need very little DDA [Disability Discrimination Act] sickness absence, I feel valued and enabled to contribute to my maximum potential.”

For some individuals, deciding to share information about a disability or neurodiversity often involves first making sense of these experiences for themselves, and then having the confidence to discuss the disability or neurodiversity, and/or their needs, with their manager in a way that is supportive and helpful.

“In my experience it very much depends on your manager. It’s the luck of the draw. I don’t think managers, or first line supervisors are, in general, aware or understanding enough of neurodiversity and how to help people achieve their maximum potential. I am a sergeant and certainly didn’t until I experienced mental ill-health 3 years ago (which is still ongoing). Have a good manager like mine and it’s very good. Have another one and it’s not. Such as: compared to another manager who had no idea about considering the root cause of

‘performance issues’ so an officer colleague of mine had over a year of pain and hassle from him before he (of his own accord) organised coaching then a neurodiversity assessment which diagnosed him with dyslexia and dyspraxia amongst other things. Then the penny dropped for that manager but by then there was no trust or confidence, and the damage was well and truly done.”

The ease with which their employer then responds to that conversation will set the scene for an effective workplace culture. It is crucial to create a working relationship that is based on shared understanding. This can be best achieved by providing information about workplace adjustments, from a position of knowledge and understanding that celebrates human difference, and specifically the talent of people with disabilities.

“It’s hard as some managers are very understanding and others are not, what we lack is a framework that we all follow that puts people and their needs at the heart of how we make decisions, I would say it’s a postcode lottery out there.”

The role of leadership will influence how line managers respond to inclusion. Supported by employee networks, access to timely information and easier-to-use processes for sorting out adjustment requests should all work together to support line managers.

“When I was a Fed rep [Police Federation representative] somebody was taken to task for not being able to use Excel spreadsheets! He had been a police officer for 28 years and then was put into a new role in which he struggled, and his supervisor was un-empathetic thinking he was

lacking motivation! The officer confided in me that he was struggling and then said he was numerically dyslexic! I asked him what training and adjustment had been made to compensate for this. They hadn't taken it into consideration! So I spoke with his manager as his supervisor thought I was meddling and asked if this could be considered and then was told he was going to be given some training and adjustment to allow more time for an Excel task. This was a good result all around – the officer felt happier and more confident in himself picking up a new skill. The manager and supervisor were being encouraged to allow a 'reasonable' adjustment. The job didn't get taken to an IT. A win-win all around!"

The College of Policing could support line managers to develop their knowledge and understanding, which would be a key intervention. This could involve helping networks to find those internal experts, spotting the storytellers, and helping individuals to influence and drive a cultural change among the line manager population, encouraged by a visibly committed leadership team.

“My line manager is supportive of me working from home on the odd days I suffer as a result of a disability. That way I can continue to work for the majority of the hours I would have done if I am well enough to do so without having to take sick days as I cannot drive into work when unwell. This is done quietly, values my work contribution and doesn't make me feel self-conscious. I appreciate this and it makes me feel more confident.”

The objective is not that every line manager is an expert in every aspect of disability and neurodiversity. It is for line managers to respond in a supportive way when approached by an individual or network leader, to know where to go to get the right support, and to know the importance of reaching a swift decision.

“I suffer from lupus and vasculitis which makes me fatigued and I am in constant pain. My line managers and senior leadership team have always been supportive and very obliging with ensuring I have the right equipment, shift pattern and regular support emotionally and professionally to assist me. I’m grateful that they do strive to do the best for us and see the equity in each of our situations and adapt accordingly.”

Recommendation

The line manager plays an essential role in supporting colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability. A good line manager who is disability confident delivers a strong supportive working environment.

Line managers should have access to relevant and timely information that guides them on how best to support colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability. Commitment to supporting workplace adjustments should be reinforced from senior leaders to help create a belief that workplace adjustments are business as usual.

Workplace adjustments

Katie's story

Katie Fulcher, Reasonable Adjustments Co-ordinator, HR Department, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

My experience of reasonable adjustments and the police attitude towards them is that they are very risk averse and evidence-based.

Line managers have a habit of only implementing adjustments if there is some sort of performance issue, or if an individual comes to them with a diagnosis and adjustment recommendations, and this is only to avoid fairness at work issues.

They also are very stuck on what is considered 'reasonable' and need evidence of a formal diagnosis. My role as Reasonable Adjustments Co-ordinator involves a lot of perception changing. I am trying to encourage line managers to be proactive rather than reactive. It is in a manager's best interest to ensure that all individuals can work on a 'level playing field'. This increases retention of employees, as well as their productivity at work.

There needs to be a change in attitude and an understanding that adjustments are not giving anyone an advantage, they are just allowing all officers and staff to be able to work and to access work. Line managers also feel the need to get Occupational Health involved at any stage, when in most cases, adjustments can be made simply through having open conversations between the manager and the officer or staff member. People are shy to use the word 'disability' or to start these conversations, meaning that people are unnecessarily struggling day-to-day.

Jennifer's story

Jennifer Holloway, Project Manager, Sussex Police, Staff Office Chair of EnAble (Sussex Police Disability and Carers' Association), National Secretary for the Disabled Police Association

EnAble is the Sussex Police Disability and Carers' Support Network. We try to take a strategic approach when we receive enquiries about recurring issues. For example, we would receive emails from colleagues

almost daily asking for support with dyslexia. From previous experience, I knew Read&Write software would address many of the issues raised. I built a business case to seek funding for a joint site licence for Sussex and Surrey, as many of our teams are collaborated.

In 2017, we submitted a business case to our Equality and Diversity Board, which is chaired by the deputy chief constable, to seek funding for the software. The business case highlighted how many colleagues were likely to have dyslexia traits. The deal agreed with Text Help included training for 20 in-house assessors (10 for Sussex and 10 for Surrey).

This means that we can train assessors in-house in future rather than paying for an external organisation to provide individual training every time it is required. Prior to implementing the joint licence, we had just six individuals in Sussex with personal Read&Write licences. Since we negotiated the joint licence, the number of individuals using the software has snowballed. The last count was at the beginning of this year, with 3,400 users! This works out at £10 per colleague.

Discussion

“From personal experience I have found this force only pay ‘lip service’ to their obligations regarding reasonable adjustments and most of the members of the Senior Leadership Team I have had dealings with disapprove of individuals having reasonable adjustments in the department I work in. Occupational Health is approached to medically redeploy people without justification in an attempt to remove ‘problem’ people from the department. I will quote a previous inspector that said to me, ‘If you can’t do all of the job all of the time, you are no good to me!’ I feel a constant pressure to prove myself to keep my job!”

The feedback from both the interviewees and the written survey stated that the approach to providing workplace adjustments needs to be improved. This feeling extended to knowledge and understanding of how adjustments could help everyone, the actual process of applying and training awareness for line managers.

“A colleague was struggling with bright lights in the office. We managed to get them dimmed to 50%. A lot of the team benefited – it was a much more pleasant working environment for everyone on the team and some people said they no longer get frequent headaches too.”

Feedback frequently referenced inclusive design where this was possible, for example, making the interview and selection process automatically easier for people with dyslexia. By routinely accommodating people’s needs, it was strongly felt that this would benefit everyone. The main driver behind wanting to raise awareness of the benefits of an adjustment was to move the culture forward to inclusivity and away from adjustments being seen as a ‘perk’. It was felt that now was the time to dispel fears from some line managers of the consequences of making workplace adjustments more widely available.

“Reasonable adjustments are seen as a perk; I don’t think the phrase ‘reasonable adjustment’ is helpful. My line manager gets hung on the policy and what does he have to do, not what he could do.”

Language was discussed above. The legal concept of reasonable adjustment does need to be understood. However, this also needs to be framed with language that starts from the perspective of what the individual needs to perform more effectively.

“When people talk about reasonable adjustments, I feel they always think about physical disability. We need to do so much more to include neurodiversity. Dyslexia in the force is much more prevalent but getting IT support is so difficult.”

The language and understanding of workplace adjustments must always include neurodiversity. The workplace adjustment process should be seen as the chance to do the right thing for colleagues who genuinely benefit from support.

Response from HR leads to the written survey	Response from network members to the written survey
86% (33) stated that their force had specific guidance on workplace adjustments.	74% (450) were aware that their force had specific guidance on workplace adjustments.
94% (36) stated that their force supported workplace adjustments as part of everyday business activity.	75% (454) stated that their workplace adjustment policy supported colleagues as part of everyday business activity.
68% (26) stated their force had a Workplace Adjustment Passport in place.	45% (272) were aware that their force had a Workplace Adjustment Passport in place.

Two-thirds of respondents to the network members' survey (68%, 413) had applied for a workplace adjustment. A third of respondents (31%, 187) indicated that some requests for a workplace adjustment had been denied. Less than a third of respondents (27%, 166) thought that disability awareness training included training on workplace adjustments.

Respondents to the network members' survey had a mixed opinion on how accessible the information on the workplace adjustment policy was for colleagues. A third of respondents (31%, 186) thought it was accessible and only 16% (98) thought it was very accessible, while 18% (11) thought that the information was difficult to access. Only 9% (54)

of respondents thought the information on workplace adjustments was well understood. The majority of respondents (65%, 393) thought there was limited understanding on workplace adjustments.

Recommendation

The language of 'reasonableness' is felt to be a hindrance. The focus should be on what an individual needs to be able to work to the best of their ability.

Agree a national approach that enables everyone connected to making a decision on supporting a colleague (individuals, line managers, Occupational Health, HR and networks) to find the right solutions more quickly that focus on the individual, the solution and the benefits.

Workplace Adjustment Passports

Information

The concept of the Workplace Adjustment Passport is used as a way of capturing and recording essential workplace adjustment agreements between the organisation and an individual.

The first well-known passport of this kind was designed by BT in 2006. It was created as a joint project between their D&I team and BT's disability network, called Able2. It came about because one of the members of the network needed a specific workplace adjustment. The adjustment didn't need to be recorded on an HR system, as this was an informal arrangement between two people. However, there needed to be a record so that if the individual or line manager moved jobs, then they didn't have to start the conversation about what workplace adjustments had been agreed from scratch. Both parties wanted something that was simple to use, cut through the bureaucratic red tape and could easily be passed on to the next manager. The term 'passport' was originally coined to allow an individual to move around an organisation without having to repeat the details of their disability or health condition and the workplace adjustments that had been agreed. In 2008, the passport idea started to gain traction and BT worked with Business Disability Forum to promote the concept among its members. BT were generous in their

wish to promote a simple framework widely for best practice.

The original concept was based on four principles:

- to be themselves at work, and to start a conversation about what practical adjustment would make it easier for them to work
- to help people with disabilities to think about and then articulate the types of adjustment that might help
- to capture an agreement that may not be formally captured elsewhere
- to facilitate the career chances of the individual if their line manager changed, their work circumstances changed, they were promoted or they left to work in another organisation

Each person is unique, as is the way that their condition affects them. Using a passport helps to support good-quality conversations between colleagues with disabilities and their managers, enabling the delivery of tailored support and appropriate workplace adjustments. Passports at their best are a living document that help individuals move easily between job roles and between organisations. They remove the need for multiple conversations, which are replaced by a focus on any changes to the support that needs to be in place.

Discussion

“I have a passport and it definitely makes things easy, it has given me confidence just knowing I have it written down what support has been agreed.”

In looking to best-practice examples and looking back to the original concept design of a Workplace Adjustment Passport, a key insight is that some of the passports used across the police forces refer back to the medical model of disability. Some questions focus on what the individual cannot do. The terminology and type of form used to capture agreements on workplace adjustment varies across forces. This makes it difficult for people who move from one force to another. The original concept of a passport was to make it easy for the individual to move jobs and move around. The approach in some forces feels

‘procedural’ and not well understood. Feedback indicates that the use of a Workplace Adjustment Passport is strongly welcomed by individuals. They are seen as having a positive impact that really helps employees who are neurodivergent or have a disability to have greater confidence in managing their support needs.

“Going through the process of setting up my passport was helpful as it made everyone focus a bit more on what I could do and how I could be helped.”

“My issue is the retelling of personal information in order to achieve reasonable adjustments. I have had to have discussions about hearing loss/hearing aids with unknown people on the phone or via web chat in the force – it’s quite a personal thing to talk about but yet there is very little understanding of how this impacts on individuals. I have now moved roles and I won’t bother with a landline as I can’t go through the process of retelling my story.”

Several interviewees felt that a universal approach to a Workplace Adjustment Passport that uses consistent terminology should be adopted by all forces. Feedback suggested that the approach should be designed with input from colleagues with first-hand experience. Questions should draw on the social model of disability and focus on positive support. The concept of a Workplace Adjustment Passport should adhere to the original four principles to help support colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability. It is suggested that a charter is drawn up to create an understanding of what a passport is, and that this charter is widely communicated to help embed the approach in everyday language. It should be made very easy for anyone to download a template to create a passport, both centrally and in each force. It is suggested that a more enabling approach to language is used.

“It was only when a colleague in the office applied for a passport and told me what it was, and that I became aware it was available. Prior to this I never knew it existed. No one had told me, not from the force, Occupational Health or supervisors. I had instead found myself having to explain to each new supervisor, or hope they told each other during their handover. Or at a point where I was about to go off sick or was off again. Feeling like I have to justify and explain again and again. With a passport now I won't have to do this.”

“My last supervisor had one himself, so once I knew of it, the process was straight forward. Had it not been for my supervisor, having one himself, and me overhearing my colleague applying for one, I would have not known of it at all.”

“The disability passport could be publicised better and used to better effect by managers. I have one which has been useful, and I use it with my staff.”

“A typical phrasing of a question in our passport feels so negative even though it's trying to be helpful, for example it says, 'describe the difficulties you are experiencing in your principle working environment'. I would feel better if it focused on what I could do.”

Recommendation

The use of a Workplace Disability Passport is strongly welcomed by individuals. These are seen as having a positive impact that really helps employees who are neurodivergent or have a disability to have greater confidence in managing their support needs. The approach in some forces feels 'procedural' and not well understood, and there is a lack of consistency across all forces.

Agree a universal approach to a Workplace Adjustment Passport, using consistent terminology that is agreed and adopted by all forces. Move the language away from 'procedure', 'reasonableness' and 'adjustment' to inclusive language, which is seen as an enabler.

Survey data

As part of the discovery research questions, respondents to the written survey were asked to establish colleague awareness of disability passports and to ascertain how many forces have a passport in place.

In all, 28 forces shared examples of disability passports forces, while 11 forces stated that they did not have a disability passport in place.

The written survey question to the network members asked, 'Are you aware if your force has a disability passport?' Under 50% of respondents answered yes that they were aware of the disability passport.

The written HR survey asked if the force had a disability passport. In all, 68% of respondents said they did have a passport in place, 29% said they did not, and 3% said they didn't know.

In reviewing the 28 submitted passports and workplace adjustment policies, it was evident that terminology used to describe the disability passport varied considerable across the different forces. These terms included:

- tailored reasonable adjustment agreement
- tailored agreement form
- reasonable adjustments procedure
- individual adjustment passport
- personal supportive passport

- my well-being passport
- limited duties for officer's guidance
- disability passport
- Access to Work guidance

It is recommended that the name 'Workplace Adjustment Passport' is adopted by all forces.

Language

“We need to move away from the legal policy wording of what might be reasonable to putting the persons needs at the heart of the process.”

This subject raised a lot of concern and discussion during the interviews. Reference was consistently made to the social model of disability. Everyone interviewed felt that any communication process should be based in more empowering positive language. The focus of communication campaigns should be on explaining the impact that changes to working practices can have, and on demonstrating how workplace adjustment helps to remove barriers. In different forces, the terms ‘Personal Support Passport’, ‘Disability Passport’ and ‘Reasonable Adjustment Procedure’ were used. Language that was used to support communication on disability and neurodiversity was not consistent across the police service. Forces with high awareness of employee networks embodied the social model of disability, while forces that had low awareness of staff networks also had low awareness of disability confidence status and workplace adjustments.

“I went from one force with a good study leave policy to one which unfortunately did not have one. This meant that I had additional stresses, but thanks to being open and speaking to people, I was able to manage this well within time. My plea for the College and certainly chief officers is to enable those officers/staff who need additional support.”

‘Reasonableness’ as a word raised concern with several interviewees. Several interviewees shared examples that illustrated how the word itself created debate.

“HR gets tied in knots about what is reasonable. Most of the adjustments I see cost less than £30 and yet we still argue if the spend was reasonable.”

Reference was often made to HR spending a lot of time deciding the legal definition of ‘reasonableness’ and referring back to wording in actual policy. The suggestion made by several interviewees was to use more enabling language that simplified the process.

“I do think we over-complicate this, the training focuses on the equality duty and does reinforce that only a tribunal can decide what is reasonable or not. We should just shift the language to say, ‘What support do you need?’ The expert here is the individual, we should just ask them. Let’s face it. It is not much different for example if someone has suffered a bereavement, yes we have a policy of leave, but I would just ask them what they needed to help.”

Most interviewees felt that guidance was needed to help colleagues to understand how to ask the right questions and hold those perceived difficult conversations about what would make the individual more effective, rather than asking what people could not do. Several people preferred the terms ‘workplace support’ and ‘workplace adjustment’ in their everyday dealings with meetings on adjustments. Many suggested that this would be a better term to use in any best-practice guidelines and should be the focus of any communication approach. However, the point was also made that exploring what is ‘reasonable’ under the equality duty is important and that there had to be a balance looking at cost and benefit. It was felt that this subject of ‘reasonableness’ should be the focus of specific national guidance to help drive a consistent approach using the social model to help frame language.

“I sometimes spend more time arguing about what is reasonable than I do find the solution to help someone.”

In the private sector, organisations are moving towards language that enables all abilities to contribute to building high-performing teams. The most popular approach is to refer to ‘workplace adjustment’.

For example, in June 2016, Sodexo reinforced its commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities by signing the ILO Global Business Disability Network Charter. Building on this, in June 2018, Sodexo UK achieved Leader status in the UK Government’s Disability Confident scheme, validating the work undertaken to create an inclusive culture. The language they are using is ‘A day without explanation’.

“You have got to turn the cup on its head and focus on what people can do. The first thing I say is forget this person has a disability, look at what they can do and what they need.”

Language varies considerably across the police service. Using language that is more inclusive moves the culture away from seeing people with disabilities as not being able to do the job towards a positive enabling approach that focuses on barriers and not the individual. The language of ‘reasonableness’ is felt to be a hindrance. The focus should be on what an individual needs to be able to work to the best of their ability.

Recommendation

Adopt consistent language that is rooted in the social model of disability to support people who are neurodivergent or have a disability. It is recommended that the terms ‘workplace adjustment’ and ‘Workplace Adjustment Passport’ be used by all forces.

Training and awareness

Discussion

“Training is via NCALT and is not in depth. Disability awareness is scant among the general population, so it is no surprise that colleagues and bosses don’t understand the barriers we face on a daily basis.”

Training for line managers and supervisors on disability did receive criticism from several of the interviewees. A frequently mentioned point was that the training focused on the equality duty and definitions of workplace adjustment. It was suggested that advice readily found on the NPAA website and the Disabled Police Association was more informative than formal training courses. Good practice and good advice are available for anyone looking for it. However, the interviewees indicated that disability awareness among line managers was low.

“There is occasionally a segment on the intranet, but not many people read the intranet often. The training does exist, but it is very much a tick box exercise and doesn’t really feel like there is much substance to it.”

Some feedback suggested that managers did not see the benefit of awareness training and had not taken part, as it was not mandatory. In all, 40% (237) of network members stated in the written survey that disability awareness training was available, while 38% (233) stated that they didn’t know if training was available. Most respondents (55%, 335) stated that they didn’t know if training included awareness on reasonable adjustments and 58% (351) stated that they didn’t know if training raised awareness of neurodiversity.

“There is a Disability Awareness Webinar which has only just been circulated, I completed this recently

and it was very beneficial. Not everyone will attend this webinar though so not everyone will benefit. There is limited work currently being undertaken though to ensure everyone has the same support available across the organisation. It is dependent on the knowledge of an individual supervisor, HR department or Occupational Health department.”

Awareness training on disability, neurodiversity and workplace adjustments appears to be a real gap across the police service. There is certainly no consistent approach and attendance of training is not monitored or reported on.

“A real opportunity exists with reasonable adjustments, especially in relation to dyslexia. Raising awareness, training for all. The assessment report normally leads to a quite generic list, not bespoke for that person. Access to Work is the preferred method in this force but again this isn’t ‘police centric’ despite best of intentions. I believe this should be in house with training/awareness for all. The environment has to be there for full disclosure without the stigma which I don’t believe we have now but can work towards by having positive role models at high levels within the organisation.”

Best practice from outside the police force is moving away from online and classroom learning, towards timelier helpful-to-know information, as is often the case in the private sector. HSBC, for example, are producing a series of ‘Helpful to Know’ guides. The idea is to support the individual to be more confident in sharing their own story – and information

about what they need – with the people who need to know in a way that is accurate and timely. For example, a colleague with dyslexia can explain how they like to operate in meetings, such as by reading notes and working with flip charts. They can explain about their dyslexia, and about how it affects them and how colleagues can help. This type of best practice is emerging in some forces who are training colleagues to be assessors and advocates.

In Sussex Police, EnAble has advocate roles for those with either knowledge or qualifications about a condition, or those with personal experience who have worked through challenges within the workplace. These advocates provide bespoke peer support and advice to others in similar situations. This has proven especially beneficial when a member contacts EnAble for advice about a rare condition. In one example, the network put out an anonymous plea to members, asking for anyone with experience who would be willing to be contacted by the other member. This approach received a fantastic level of response and offers of support. With the recent pandemic, Sussex Police have seen a substantial increase in different forms of anxiety. As a result, advocates have assisted in setting up an Anxiety Support Group (soon to be split into regional support groups due to its size), a Post Traumatic Stress Support Group (again growing rapidly), and more recently a Long COVID Support Group (which updates the force about long-term symptoms to assist in identifying adjustments that may be required going forwards). Each group is led by advocates who have personal experience of the respective conditions. Advocates liaise with external charities and organisations to identify potential sources of support that are available outside of work.

A similar approach is called ‘Expert Patient’ in Royal Mail Group, where individuals with a condition support other colleagues and help manage the awareness raising with people who need to know. This approach is becoming a more accepted form of targeted learning.

Recommendation

Training and awareness focus is currently on the legal equality duty and on the definitions and legal application of workplace adjustment. Training tends not to include how to create an inclusive disability confident culture and does not cover the social model of disability. It does not raise awareness of impairments, nor of how to help manage them.

Create information guides on equality duty and reasonable adjustments that can be easily accessed as reference material as and when needed. Create on-demand video tutorials. Move the focus of awareness raising to 'helpful to know guides' that can be used by individuals with disabilities to help raise knowledge with colleagues. Create listening groups to help share stories of lived experience. Move away from standardised training packages for everyone to tailored information as and when people need to know.

Disability Confident

Information

The UK government launched their Disability Confident scheme in September 2016, which is designed to help employers:

- draw from the widest possible pool of talent
- secure and retain high-quality staff who are skilled, loyal and hard-working
- save time and money on the costs of recruitment and training by reducing staff turnover
- keep valuable skills and experience
- reduce the levels and costs of sickness absences
- improve employee morale and commitment by demonstrating that they treat all employees fairly

The term 'disability confident' was originally conceived by the Business Disability Forum and is now used all over the world.

Many employees with disabilities are employed by organisations who know how to build inclusive workplaces. In order to be truly successful, individuals have to build inner confidence and resilience, especially those people who are newly diagnosed with a health condition, disability or mental ill health. But what does individual confidence mean to you or to me? How do you stay confident at work? How do you ask for an adjustment that you need?

The Disability Confident scheme supports the government's commitment to having 1 million more people with disabilities in work by 2027. The scheme is about creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and to take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities.

The aims for Disability Confident are to give employers the skills, techniques and confidence they need to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities.

There are three levels that employers can work through to demonstrate how they are providing support to help colleagues who are neurodivergent or have a disability. Level 1 is Confident and Committed, level 2 is Confident Employer, and level 3 is Confident Leader.

A voluntary reporting framework has been developed by the government in partnership with large employers and expert partners (including leading charities) to support organisations to record and voluntarily report information on disability, mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

The government believes that transparency and reporting are effective levers in driving the culture change required to build a more inclusive society.

Discussion

“It's not rocket science; I know we are a bigger force, but we have achieved level 3 and it was a good framework to help us get better. All forces should be at level 3 by now, it's not a new scheme, I can't believe that other forces don't make use of the framework, you would think it would be mandatory to be level 3.”

Five forces have achieved level 3 Disability Confident Leader status, 25 forces have achieved level 2, and nine forces have achieved level 1. Four forces stated that they didn't know if they

had any status as a Disability Confident employer. Most forces indicated that there were aspiring to achieve level 3.

Of the HR respondents, 94% (36) were confident of their force's approach to disability. However, confidence in line managers' capability of having a proactive and inclusive conversation was much lower, with 52% (20) stating that they were not confident. Only 2% (1) of HR respondents were very confident to discuss workplace adjustments. Confidence to discuss adjustments for neurodiversity was much lower, at 47% (18).

“We have trained over 40 volunteers to support colleagues with similar conditions. For example, we have one who specialises on multiple sclerosis and several who support with dyslexia. Peer groups are very effective. We focus on what we can do.”

In all, 92% of HR respondents stated that they had achieved level 1 or 2 Disability Confident status. Only five have achieved level 3. All forces stated that they aspired to achieve the next level.

“The framework is useful, but we don't have the data. I don't know what we spend and how many reasonable adjustments we provide. We would have so much work to do to achieve level 3 and without resource we won't be able to do. We are aspiring to get to level 2.”

The Disability Confident framework set out by DWP provides a good basis to develop clear action plans to help create an inclusive culture. Many private-sector employers are now at level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. This is recognised as being a good benchmark to achieve, as it requires validation of steps 1 and 2. This involves looking at recording of evidence and ensuring that progress is being made on mental health and neurodiversity. This step involves using the voluntary reporting framework to publicly report on disability employment. For

the police, having this degree of transparency will be effective at driving the internal change to a more open and inclusive culture. It's not an easy step to achieve, and it does demand that participating organisations can evidence attraction, recruitment and retention strategies for people with disabilities. Being able to take a very proactive approach to workplace adjustments is a key part of the process in level 3.

'It wasn't easy to achieve level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. But it's not meant to be. And it meant that we were all the prouder when we did get it. What's powerful is that it has to be validated, so disabled people have to agree [with] everything you are saying.'

Recommendation

Only seven forces had achieved level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. Most forces had achieved level 2 and 3. However, these do not require independent verification, good data capture and visible leadership.

It is recommended that all forces make a clear action plan with a defined timeframe to achieve level 3 Disability Confident Leader status. All forces should be at this level by December 2023. Learning should be shared from the exemplar forces with webinars to the employee staff networks to help share tips and advice to achieve level 3. Resources should be made available at a central level to enable the forces to dedicate time and effort to putting processes in place for capturing data to evidence progress.

Best practice: Avon and Somerset Police

In July 2020, Avon and Somerset Police won the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion Award for Neurodiversity. This was in recognition for a range of initiatives they have developed that recognise the different needs of neurodiverse people (both those who work for the force and those who officers and colleagues come into contact with).

The award recognises the force's collaboration with the Centre for Applied Autism Research at the University of Bath and the Bristol Autism Spectrum Service, which has enabled the force to create a training package to give staff a better understanding of autism. For the first time, the force's staff survey asked about neurodiversity.

The award recognises work in trying to understand how and why people

with autism are over-represented in the criminal justice system and are seven times more likely to come into contact with the police. The Autism Cells Project aims to make custody a less stressful experience for detainees with autism. The project has made changes to the physical custody environment and it provides enhanced training for custody staff.

Avon and Somerset have proven that a police force can achieve Disability Confident Leader status, and can challenge, change and lead attitudes towards disability and neurodiversity. In doing so, forces can remove barriers for people with disabilities, to ensure that opportunities are provided that help individuals to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. By using inclusive language, Avon and Somerset has put the social model at the heart of its thinking.

Avon and Somerset are exemplars and have already put in place the recommendations suggested in this report, proving that anticipating and responding to people's needs can be done.

The video 'Be the difference' shows that all types of human difference are effective officers and colleagues.

Attraction and recruitment

Discussion

“We need to flip this on its head, it's not about special advantage. It's about not screening out talented individuals because they can't conform to how we do it in the police.”

The issue of how police forces conduct the attraction and selection process was mentioned by several interviewees. Some forces are using their own colleagues to lead expert networks to examine practical actions, for example, by writing job adverts that are designed to attract neurodiverse candidates and use exact language rather than generic skills, avoiding terms like 'excellent communication skills'.

A few examples were shared where the network leaders had really fought to get the interview process changed, for example, being able to

share the questions 30 minutes in advance in a written format to help candidates prepare.

“In our interview process we shouldn’t wait for somebody to tell us what they need, and we shouldn’t have to ask for someone to disclose a disability. We shouldn’t even talk about conditions. We just say to everyone, ‘Do you need any adjustments? If we did this for everyone no one would feel singled out.’”

The NPAA is outstanding in how it advocates for valuing individuals for their strengths and creating a workplace environment and culture in which everyone can fulfil their potential. They are aiming to end the stigma, prejudice and ignorance surrounding neurodivergent conditions. They have the best-practice knowledge. Enabling networks to support more colleagues would be a powerful asset to the police service.

“Neurodiversity training within the force has been lacking. The network picked some of the demand up but received no support and it was not sustainable. A renewed effort to work with L&D [Learning and Development] is about to start, and we will see how it progresses.”

In the private sector, many organisations are collaborating with specialist help to ensure inclusive attraction and selection programmes. The Police Uplift Programme will be competing with the private sector to attract neurodiverse talent.

Goldman Sachs launched its Neurodiversity Hiring Initiative in April 2019. The eight-week paid programme provides on-the-desk experience in one of the firm’s divisions to people with autism, dyslexia, developmental disorders, mental health conditions and ADHD. Participants also receive mentoring opportunities, technical skill building, and professional development training.

“I know of a new recruit with epilepsy who nearly did not accept a job because his occupational health referral focussed on everything that he would not be able to do in the role. Luckily, he was put into contact with me so I could let him know all the things he could still do. The majority of staff are positive and welcoming to those with adjustments, but there is still an underlying feeling that we create problems, and that disabled people aren't as helpful as those who do not need adjustments.”

In discussion about recruitment best practice, feedback suggested that the police service needs to be more innovative in the way that job descriptions and the person specification are written, so as to not unintentionally rule out applicants who could do the job. Make the content of job adverts accessible. Avoid jargon and be clear about the essential requirements of the role, so people can make their own decisions whether to apply. Several interviewees also thought that the police service could be more open about their approach to disability, to encourage applicants to share their workplace adjustment needs at all points along the recruitment journey.

Recommendation

It is important that all people involved in the recruitment process have good disability-related training and development.

The networks and internal experts should be consulted on advert design and reviewing the interview process to apply inclusive design where possible. Candidates should be given the opportunity to ask for adjustments in the application information.

Summary of data insights

- 92% (35) of HR respondents stated that their force had a D&I strategy.
- 75% (451) of network members stated that their force had a D&I strategy.
- 44% (17) of HR respondents stated that the D&I strategy made reference to disability and neurodiversity. However, a third of these high-level strategies only made reference to disability, with 18% (7) responding that the D&I strategy did not reference either disability or neurodiversity.
- 46% (281) of network members stated that the D&I strategy did make reference to disability and neurodiversity. However, 42% (254) responded that they did not know if the D&I strategy referenced either disability or neurodiversity.
- 68% (26) of HR respondents stated that they did have a disability passport in place. However, awareness among network members was much lower, with only 45% (272) stating that a passport was in place.
- 94% (36) of HR respondents stated that they believed that their force did support adjustments to work as part of everyday business activity. The same question had a lower positive response from network members, with 75% (454) believing that support was part of everyday business activity.
- 67% (405) of network members felt that there was limited understanding of their force's approach to disability and neurodiversity, and 65% (393) felt that there was limited understanding of the approach to reasonable adjustment. Only 16% (98) of network members felt that information on workplace adjustment was very accessible.
- Respondents to the network members' survey showed high awareness of staff networks on disability (81%, 487). However, awareness of networks on neurodiversity was much lower at 41% (248).
- 65% (394) of network members who responded had applied for a reasonable adjustment. In all, 36% (226) thought that the process was either very easy or easy, and 30% (183) felt that the process

was not easy or difficult. However, the majority of respondents to the network members' survey (70%, 422) felt confident to apply if they needed support, while 31% (188) of respondents stated that they or a colleague had been denied a workplace adjustment.

- 76% (29) of HR respondents stated that they did not have enough data on disability, neurodiversity or reasonable adjustments. 36% (14) stated they did not keep any record of workplace adjustments. 36% (14) stated that they didn't know if requests had increased or decreased in the previous year.
- 40% (237) of network members stated that disability awareness training was available. However, 37% (233) stated that they didn't know if awareness training was available. In all, 55% (335) stated that they didn't know if training included awareness on reasonable adjustments, while 58% (351) stated that they didn't know if training raised awareness of neurodiversity.
- 52% (20) of HR respondents felt that there was no difference in practice of how disability is dealt with for officers in comparison to staff.

Access to Work

The following is an extract from West Midlands Police Workplace Adjustments Policy and Adjustment Passport.

“It is advised that individuals contact the Reasonable Adjustment Service in the Diversity and Inclusion Team before making contact with Access to Work.

Access to Work is a specialist disability service delivered by Job Centre Plus, which gives practical advice and support to disabled people, whether they are working, self- employed or looking for employment. Access to Work is provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond the reasonable adjustments which an employer is legally obliged to provide under the Equality Act.

Access to Work can help employers retain an employee

who develops a disability or long-term condition (keeping their valuable skills and saving both time and money recruiting a replacement) and to support your employees who have a mental health condition.

Who Is Eligible? To be eligible for help, a person must have a disability or health condition that has a long term substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out their job.

What type of help is provided? Access to Work can support customers in a number of ways. For example, it can provide funds towards:

- Special aids and equipment
- Adaptations to equipment
- Travel to work
- Travel in work
- Communication support at interviews
- A wide variety of support workers, and
- The Mental Health Support Service

Access to Work does not provide the support itself but provides a grant to reimburse the cost of the support that is needed. 100% grants are available for people starting a job or people who have less than 6 weeks service when they first apply.

When cost sharing applies, Access to Work may refund up to 80% of the approved costs between a threshold and £10,000. West Midlands Police may contribute 100% of costs up to the threshold level (£1,000) and 20% of the costs between the threshold and £10,000. Any balance above £10,000 will normally be met by Access to Work.

For current levels of support contact Access to Work direct or visit their website at <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>. The Reasonable Adjustment Service will be able to provide advice as to whether an Access to Work claim is the most appropriate way to fund adjustments.”

Access to Work was mentioned by a few interviewees. The scheme did not seem widely understood. It was specifically mentioned in a few policies on workplace adjustment, for example, by West Midlands Police.

There did not seem to be easily accessible data on how many grants had been applied for, and for what type of adjustments. Several interviewees stated that Access to Work was not always helpful, as the assessors didn't really understand the police, especially when recommending ICT solutions. When asked about Access to Work, a few interviewees said they used it a lot for more expensive adjustments.

“I applied for Access to Work but it was not an easy process, they didn't really understand the police, and our HR team didn't seem to know how to apply for the grant. The solution their assessor recommended can't be used with our systems.”

“We do use Access to Work, however I do not have any data on this. Most applications are done by line managers/individuals themselves, so I do not get involved unless it is brought to my attention, which it generally is not. This is something that we are trying to fix, as data collection is not a strong suit across [our force]. I have no awareness of even an approximation of how many applications are made.”

“Appears to be a lack in funding for equipment which results in reasonable adjustment requests not being possible.”

ICT workplace adjustments

Discussion

Several interviews mentioned the complexity of ICT-related workplace adjustments.

“What is really hard in the police is when several departments are all involved in making a decision about supporting a colleague with a reasonable adjustment. This is especially true for IT. If someone wants software for example, I have often had to convince HR it’s needed, then I have to persuade IT that it’s OK, then I have to explain it to the line manager and then I have to go to finance who ask for an investment case. Honestly the hours I can spend trying to get a simple decision must cost the force a small fortune.”

The main issues were identified as follows.

- Lack of timely provision.
- Not up-to-date assistive software – Access to Work funding less available for older software.
- Long process for new software adoption.
- Compatibility with systems – how many forces buy before they try?
- Software and OS update planning – group policy.
- Lack of early consideration of accessibility of systems – lack of sanctions for non-compliance – covered on equality impact assessments (EIAs) but how many are actually done?
- Mobile phone accessibility considerations and app accessibility (legislation comes in June 2021 to enforce).
- Order points and variety of teams involved.

- Multiple orders for users – bundle ordering system is easier.
- No dedicated reasonable adjustment or assistive technology process, team or business partner within ICT – a vendor manager for assistive technology would be beneficial.
- Lack of knowledge of processes – by organisation and ICT.
- Changes to standard equipment offered.
- Security levels of user role, Bluetooth and technological solutions.
- Language used by the ICT and Equality teams – how does the average worker see the words?
- Training and support needs and arrangements.
- Budgetary constraints more evident in forces without a centralised budget – ICT solutions are generally expensive, so local budgets are less willing to spend due to other budget concerns.

Tamzin's ideas for accessible ICT

Tamzin Drury, Force ICT Accessibility Advisor, Digital Investigation and Intel Project, Hampshire Police

By working more collaboratively at a national level, we attempt to reduce the requirement of each force to complete the same piece of work for industry-standard assistive technology, such as Dragon, JAWS and Dolphin. This can be a long process with several steps involved in achieving compliance.

There is an opportunity to request that the National Enabling Programme or Police ICT Company complete some of security and compatibility testing for use in a Windows 10 environment. This is being considered by the National ICT Accessibility Working Group (NICTAWG). Alternatively, one force or the College of Policing could take on this role and share the appropriate information with all forces. While each force would still need to complete in-house checks, it is anticipated that there would be an overall reduction in the number of steps required, thereby speeding up the process.

Forces are all at different stages in the digital accessibility journey, many

having made their own way through necessity rather than through guidance.

It would be beneficial to consider recommending one or two agreed pieces of industry-standard dyslexia software. However, many forces use different options. A decision to use just one would be an easy transition for some forces, but much harder for others who do not currently use it. There are implications for training the users of the software and the setup (for example, TextHelp, Read&Write). Capacity to retrain every user and set them up again may not be resourced well enough to enable upgrades to latest versions.

With the increase in web-based applications, it would also be beneficial to agree on a selection of suitable web plug-ins or widgets for use on the relevant applications that have been passed by security (for example, Helperbird, ATBar or Midnight Lizard).

Forces may benefit from having a specialist who understands both ICT and reasonable adjustments to be a source of advice for both areas. In November 2019, the Force ICT Accessibility Advisor (FICTAA) role was created to enable a focus on accessibility for Hampshire. This is still developing as a role. Involvement in the disability access strategy for our customers is one area that is taking a priority at present.

Within Hampshire, it has been agreed to provide the FICTAA with an accessibility awareness lab, which can be used to promote accessibility, offer training and testing of equipment by users and developers. It is inspired by the UK government's accessibility empathy lab.

With the increase in awareness of neurodiversity and an increase in colleagues with a variety of access needs, the time is right to focus on accessible ICT so we can accommodate increased demand.

The Sussex EnAble Network's story

With the recent uplift of officer recruitment, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of individuals requesting support for dyslexia. The nature of policing encourages those who excel in people skills and problem-solving skills. Quite often, those individuals may have a neurodiverse way of thinking or learning difference.

To address this, we implemented force-wide Read&Write software, which

is accessible to everyone on every computer across Sussex and Surrey. We now have over 4,500 users (a huge leap from three years ago, when we had just six users).

We've also seen an influx of new recruits being referred to EnAble for support rather late in their probationary period, often at the point of facing Reg.13 procedures (losing their job). Very often, adjustments for these individuals are cost-free, requiring a little time to discuss their challenges and identify potential adjustments that may be useful. We often use a free adjustments screener through the Genius Within website, which is very similar to a dyslexia screening assessment but does not provide a diagnosis. However, it does provide a visual image of someone's cognitive profile, as well as advice and strategies to try.

We often provide an hour's training for the Read&Write software to enable the individuals to make best use of the key features, and sometimes follow this up with some basic mentoring and coaching if required. A typical example involves a new recruit, who was struggling with the academic work and was placed on an action plan to 'significantly improve their work' within the next two or three weeks, else they would face Reg. 13 procedures. Early intervention would very likely have avoided this situation arising. With our support, they undertook the Genius Within screening to identify their strengths and weaknesses, followed by an hour of Read&Write training. They then had two mentoring sessions to develop strategies to manage stress levels, improve concentration, and learn different ways to take in the material. Just three hours of cost-free intervention has turned that individual's hopes of becoming an officer into an achievable goal, and their tutors and supervisors have been amazed at the speedy improvement.

“I have severe dyslexia and the text help Read&Write has made such a difference to me. Without it I have to ask other people to read emails and messages to me.”

“The Read&Write software is excellent. When I'm tired it can read for me, so I can have my eyes

closed. I can change the colour of the screen too and, being dyslexic, this helps.”

“I tend to use Read&Write towards the end of my working day/shift, when my eyes are tired, and my brain frazzled. The screen tint is amazing at reducing glare and making the text clearer. The read aloud function is also great as I can hear the text as well as see it, and this helps me to process and retain the information better.”

Effective communication

Storytelling was felt to be the key enabler for effective communication. The effective use of peer-to-peer support in the staff networks, as well as people sharing their first-hand experience, was felt to achieve an understanding of how adjustments helped and encouraged others to talk about their own needs.

“One of the biggest challenges is individuals not liking to ask, or being frightened of being turned down so that they do not ask in the first place. There is lots of misinformation in force as people presume rather than to seek answers. We need to increase confidence for staff to ask for support, but also educate line managers at every level to have confidence to support their staff by having open conversations about disability in every form – based on people’s abilities, not their dis-abilities.”

Interviewees felt strongly that personal stories were one of the most powerful ways to share the importance of providing support to

colleagues with disabilities. Feedback from the interviews strongly indicated that any communication approach should move away from purely focusing on the legal duty and procedural process to a more personalised approach.

“I think understanding needs to come a long way. If anyone in our force needs any adjustment we have to have Occupational Health referrals, etc, otherwise it does not happen. Also we are all being relocated, this causes a lot of stress for me (I am neurodiverse). My colleagues did not understand when I said I needed reasonable adjustments, saying I cannot work in a large open plan office filled with different people everyday, hot-desking, and in a location I cannot get to because it is unfamiliar. When I said this was not accessible to me, my colleagues actually said accessibility is down to being able to use the stairs/wheelchairs etc. It seems no one understands I have major sensory problems and need a very strict routine and I cannot work from home because of this. Luckily the people in charge of the relocation do understand and I am awaiting an Occupational Health referral so they can organise a location to work from that is close to home and not overwhelming. I think a lot of people do not understand how stressful life can be for some of us. I am lucky to still be in work with some of the problems I have but luckily my management team are generally very supportive to me.”

Several forces are using more interactive ways of sharing stories. Podcasts, email newsletter and websites with video content are being used to share how and why workplace adjustments are so important to people. Other forces, however, rely on policies and procedures that have to be sought out, often by the individual who needs an adjustment. Circuitous routes were frequently described as ‘meeting after meeting with Human Resources, Occupational Health, Finance and line managers’, which focused on what could or could not be done within the policy. Examples of effective colleague engagement and strong communication approaches, all using real stories of first-hand experience showing how colleagues with disabilities wanted to be treated, were mentioned as being most effective.

Conclusion

“We have been talking about getting better at this for a long time, but nothing really happens.”

In her foreword, Deputy Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman shares her suspicions that the police service has a lot of colleagues who do not yet have the confidence to share the details of their disability or neurodiversity, and therefore maybe struggling.

There will be many reasons why colleagues may be cautious about sharing information. Many will not associate with the word ‘disability’, while others may feel that their line manager will be supportive.

“There appears to me to be a significant lean towards BAME [Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups] within the diversity arena of policing, with physical disabilities coming a poor second best, and neurodiversity not even considered, to the point where I feel that there is a conscious element of placing staff protected characteristics into a hierarchy dependent on the senior management

agenda of the moment. This is not the Code of Ethics that I joined to uphold, and I am constantly disappointed in my force.”

The discovery research has found compelling evidence of best-practice approaches. There are standout people who have had the courage to share their own story to help drive change for others. These people have their own first-hand experience and knowledge of the operational aspects of policing. These people are true change agents who the police force should listen to and embrace.

However, many individuals also shared very challenging experiences that question the underlying culture in some forces.

“In my experience, our force lets down people with disabilities. I was bullied and victimised for whistleblowing about the toilet issue and the use of disability discriminatory language in the workplace. I am still being victimised two years later. The issue was in relation to inappropriate use of language; where people would refer to others as ‘spas’ or ‘retards’. I explained that this inappropriate use of language was not department specific, that I had heard this use of language across several departments and divisions during my 12 and a half years in the force; language which was not acceptable. I wanted to help drive change and suggested that we educate officers by using personal experience, which I thought really highlighted the fact that you never know the story of other people in the room or who you may be offending. I have a child with a chromosomal

disorder and an array of disabilities, so this is a personal issue for me. My own inspector had said ‘chromosomal disorders are a result of inbreeding’ and my sergeant called me a ‘spastic’ in the office. I was not making a complaint of specific individuals; I was expressing that there was a cultural issue of language being used which is not diverse and is offensive. The reaction to this was to be treated as a ‘snitch’.”

The employee networks are by far the best way to engage and promote awareness. Central support is needed for funding networks. Network leaders would benefit from training and advice on how to run a successful network. More time to run the networks would be a huge motivating factor for the people involved. Demand is growing from individuals who need support with managing disability and neurodiversity and applying for workplace adjustments. Given that the Police Uplift Programme is looking to increase the number of people recruited who have a disability and/or neurodiversity, there is a concern that the networks will become overloaded with work. The College of Policing should look to support the networks, who can then support individuals in their own disability confidence.

“Individuals don’t like to have a disability (or may not need any help with a disability) or may not even think they are neurodiverse – even when others can see/experience it. There are long-ingrained cultural connotations with disability that are ingrained within individuals. There is more talk, more openness, but I do not believe that there is a high level of personal declaration/awareness/acceptance. As such, it is as much about people: 1) being aware they are

different; 2) being happy to declare; 3) needing /wanting support. As such, policy, process and comms is only part of the journey.”

Best-practice approaches to policies on workplace adjustments already exist. These need to be formalised into a national standard and adopted by all forces. Work is underway with the National Enabling Programme and NICTAWG, and this research has highlighted the necessity to support colleagues who need accessible ICT. This work would benefit from a national approach, drawing on best practice to create an accessibility hub. This would enable colleagues to visit a centre of excellence to try out software and receive training.

“The request for reasonable adjustments from Access to Work assessments or internal workplace assessments are difficult to implement. Often recommendations for IT support are ignored claiming they just don’t have the equipment.”

Recommendations for improving training and awareness would be to help the networks to share learning using natural storytellers and champions. Individuals should be supported via the networks, helping to increase individuals’ confidence to manage their adjustment needs. Formal training programmes were reported to be less effective and poorly attended. The most effective approach at helping to raise understanding of disability and neurodiversity is to engage people, share stories and make the concept of workplace adjustment real, showing how an inclusive culture will benefit the police service.

The police service has all the assets it needs to become an exemplar employer nationwide. If every force used the Disability Confident Leader framework – supported by the chief constable with an empowered and well-resourced network – then the goal to advance equalities by ensuring an inclusive and supportive workplace could be achieved. There is a need for central resources, both budget and knowledge to help drive engagement and awareness at a local level.

Over 1,000 comments were submitted via the surveys, including the following.

- “We need to steer away from the culture that believes RAs [reasonable adjustments] are only applicable for those who meet the criteria of a disability under the Equality Act. RAs should be available for everyone who needs a little support, whether temporary, short term or long term.”
- “For me it has been a struggle to get things in place, especially when moving roles and had some of the adjustments removed as the supervisor did not agree with them even though my disability had not changed, in fact it had got worse. Once reasonable adjustments due to disability are in place they should not be removed, this [puts] immense stress on the individual who has to then start the whole process again. There should be more internal training for supervisors in regard to internal reasonable adjustments and home working.”
- “In one particular case it has been a struggle to get management to take any action around carrying out a risk assessment for a neurodiverse individual and then granting reasonable adjustments required – it is due to this particular management’s lack of care and ignorance. It still has not been resolved and has been ongoing for months.”

“I don’t believe that adjustments are fully understood or accommodated with the police force other than taking officers off frontline policing. I have a hearing impairment and have been placed on adjusted duties but expected to work in the largest office on the station, I was expected to source my own headphones, which do not fit the IT and there is also a hot desk policy so no soundproofing barriers can or are provided. As a ‘hidden’ disability it is not taken into consideration on a daily basis, and I find myself explaining my situation to supervisors who are already aware. My annual review is due and part of the conversation was whether or not my case should be reviewed by the force medical officer again as my situation may have ‘improved’, not with a degenerative hearing loss it won’t. Not overly satisfactory in my opinion/experience.”

“I personally have reasonable adjustments in place, but there was a huge delay in them being implemented. They are of benefit. Employees in [my force] have no way of knowing what is available in terms of reasonable adjustments, this should be better publicised. At the moment they have to seek them out themselves, refer to Occupational Health or if they are lucky and have a switched online manager, they may access them this way. However, the guidance to line managers is poor. Home working during COVID

will really benefit employees going forward, as it has proven that it is possible to work from home, and most people now have the right equipment in place or have been made aware of how to access it. We do not have disability training, which I believe should take place, and do not have a specific neurodiversity support group, although the Disabled Police Association covers this, and we have had working groups. I do not feel the working groups have had much positive effect however, rather they have just 'ticked a box' for the SLT [Senior Leadership Team]. The disability passport could be publicised better and used to better effect by managers. I have one which has been useful, and I use it with my staff."

Appendix 1: Participating forces

In all, 45 forces were invited to participate (including the British Transport Police and the College of Policing). Several forces were combined, so 38 responses were received from 42 forces (including the British Transport Police and the College of Policing). Three forces did not return the survey. Forces with Disability Confident level 3 status are shown in bold.

	Police force	Disability Confident level	Disability Passport in place	Employee staff network	Forces that took part in the HR Survey
1	Avon and Somerset Constabulary	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Bedfordshire Police	2	Yes	Yes	Completed with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire
3	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	2	Yes	Yes	Completed with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire
4	Cheshire Constabulary	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	City of London Police	Didn't know	No	Yes	Yes
6	Cleveland Police	2	No	Yes	Yes
7	Cumbria Constabulary	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Derbyshire Constabulary	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Devon and Cornwall Police	2	No	Yes	Yes
10	Dorset Police	Didn't know	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Police force	Disability Confident level	Disability Passport in place	Employee staff network	Forces that took part in the HR Survey
11	Durham Constabulary	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Dyfed-Powys Police	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Essex Police	2	Yes	Yes	Completed with Kent
14	Gloucestershire Constabulary	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Greater Manchester Police	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	Gwent Police	2	No	Yes	Yes
17	Hampshire Constabulary	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Hertfordshire Constabulary	2	Yes	Yes	Completed with Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire
19	Humberside Police	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	Kent Police	2	Yes	Yes	Completed with Essex
21	Lancashire Constabulary	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	Leicestershire Constabulary	2	No	Yes	Yes
23	Lincolnshire Police	Didn't know	No	Yes	Yes
24	Merseyside Police	2	Unknown	Yes	Not returned

	Police force	Disability Confident level	Disability Passport in place	Employee staff network	Forces that took part in the HR Survey
25	Metropolitan Police Services	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	Norfolk Constabulary (and Suffolk)	1	No	Yes	Completed with Suffolk
27	North Wales Police	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
28	North Yorkshire Police	2	Unknown	Yes	Not returned
29	Northamptonshire Police	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
30	Northumbria Police	1	No	Yes	Yes
31	Nottinghamshire Police	Didn't know	Yes	Yes	Yes
32	South Wales Police	2	No	Yes	Yes
33	South Yorkshire Police	2	Unknown	Yes	Not returned
34	Staffordshire Police	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
35	Suffolk Constabulary (and Norfolk)	2	Yes	Yes	Completed with Norfolk
36	Surrey Police (and Sussex)	3	Yes	Yes	Completed with Sussex
37	Sussex Police (and (Surrey))	3	Yes	Yes	Completed with Surrey
38	Thames Valley Police	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
39	Warwickshire Police	1	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Police force	Disability Confident level	Disability Passport in place	Employee staff network	Forces that took part in the HR Survey
40	West Mercia Police	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
41	West Midlands Police	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
42	West Yorkshire Police	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
43	Wiltshire Police	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
44	College of Policing	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
45	British Transport Police	1	No	Yes	Yes

Appendix 2: Data from the HR survey

Does your force have a Diversity and Inclusion strategy?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Confident	92.11%	35
Not confident	7.89%	3
Total entries		38

Does your Diversity and Inclusion strategy make specific reference to disability and neurodiversity?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	44.7%	17
Reference to disability only	28.95%	11
No	18.42%	7
Don't know	7.89%	3
Total entries		38

Does your force have specific guidance on reasonable adjustments?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	86.84%	33
No	10.53%	4
Don't know	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

Does your force have a disability passport?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	68.42%	26
No	28.95%	11
Don't know	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

Does your force support adjustments to work as part of everyday business activity?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	94.74%	36
No	2.63%	1
Don't know	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

How confident are you that your force's approach to disability and neurodiversity is in line with your force's aspirations towards a thriving diverse workforce?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	94.74%	36
No	2.63%	1
Don't know	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

How confident are you that first and second line supervisors are capable of having proactive, inclusive conversations with officers/staff about disability?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Confident	52.63%	19
Not confident	52.63%	19
Total entries		38

How confident are you that interviews to discuss reasonable adjustments with disabled colleagues are effective?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Confident	68.42%	26
Not confident	21.05%	8
Don't know	7.89%	3
Very confident	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

How confident are you that interviews to discuss reasonable adjustments with neurodiverse colleagues are effective?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Confident	47.37%	18
Not confident	47.37%	18
Not sure	5.26%	2
Total entries		38

Do you think there is a difference in practice of how disability is dealt with for officers in comparison to staff?

Choices	Percentage	Count
No	52.63%	20
Yes	34.21%	13
Don't know	13.16%	5
Total entries		38

Does your force have disability confident status?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	94.74%	36
Don't know	5.26%	2
Total entries		38

If you answered yes, please indicate which level you have achieved.

Choices	Percentage	Count
Level 2	39.47%	15
Level 1	34.21%	13
Level 3	10.53%	4
Don't know	7.89%	3
Total entries		38
Unanswered		3

Does your force have an aspiration to improve the level of disability confidence status?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	71.05%	27
Don't know	15.79%	6
No	10.53%	4
Total entries		38
Unanswered		1

If you answered yes, please indicate which level of disability confidence you are currently aiming to achieve.

Choices	Percentage	Count
Level 3	39.47%	15
Level 2	23.68%	9
Don't know	18.42%	7
Total entries		38
Unanswered		7

How accessible is the information on reasonable adjustments in your force?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Accessible	65.79%	25
Very accessible	15.79%	6
Not very accessible	15.79%	6
Difficult	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

Do you think your force's approach to disability and neurodiversity is well-understood by colleagues?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Limited understanding	60.53%	23
Well understood	34.21%	13
Very well understood	2.63%	1
Don't know	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

Do you think your force's approach to reasonable adjustments is well-understood by colleagues?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Limited understanding	47.37%	18
Well understood	44.74%	17
Very well understood	2.63%	2
Don't know	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

Does your force carry out disability awareness training?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	57.89%	22
No	34.21%	13
Don't know	7.89%	3
Total entries		38

Who controls your budget for reasonable adjustments?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Centrally managed budget	60.53%	20
Departmental budget	34.21%	12
Don't know	2.63%	5
Team budget	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

Do you feel the budgetary process could be improved to better support the reasonable adjustment approach?

Choices	Percentage	Count
No	50.00%	19
Yes	28.95%	11
Don't know	21.05%	8
Total entries		38

Do you feel you have enough data available to understand the level of disabilities, neurodiversity and range of adjustments in place across your force?

Choices	Percentage	Count
No	76.32%	29
Yes	21.05%	8
Don't know	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

What percentage of your force have shared they have a disability or neurodiversity?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Between 2% and 5%	44.74%	17
Between 6% and 10%	23.68%	9
Don't know	21.05%	8
More than 10%	5.26%	2
1% or less	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

Do you keep a central record of those who have applied for a reasonable adjustment?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	50.00%	19
NO	36.8%	14
Don't know	13.16%	5
Total entries		38

In the past year how many colleagues have requested a reasonable adjustment?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Don't know	50.00%	19
Between 51 and 100	18.42%	7
More than 100	15.79%	6
Between 21 and 50	13.16%	5
20 or less	2.63%	1
Total entries		38

In the past year how many colleagues have actually received a reasonable adjustment?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Don't know	44.74%	17
Between 51 and 100	18.42%	7
More than 100	15.79%	6
Between 21 and 50	15.79%	6
20 or less	5.26%	2
Total entries		38

Has the number of requests received this year changed from previous years?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Increased	47.37%	18
Don't know	34.21%	13
Decreased	10.53%	4
Stayed the same	7.89%	3
Total entries		38

Please tick examples of the types of reasonable adjustments you have provided in the last 2 years.

Choices	Percentage	Count
Ergonomic support chairs	94.74%	36
Adjustable desks	92.11%	35
Assistive technology support	92.11%	35
Flexible working	89.47%	34
Noise reduction headphones	78.95%	30
Coloured paper	76.32%	29
Modifying how a job is done	76.32%	29
Other		
Quiet areas	65.79%	25
Adjusting a physical building	44.74%	17
Support worker	31.58%	12
Other	28.95%	11
Sign language interpreter	26.32%	10
Total entries		38
Unanswered		2

Appendix 3: Data from the network survey

Does your force have a Diversity and Inclusion strategy?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	75.04%	451
Don't know	23.13%	139
No	1.83%	11
Total		601

Does your Diversity and Inclusion strategy make specific reference to disability and neurodiversity?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	46.76%	281
Don't know	42.26%	254
Reference to disability only	7.32%	44
No	3.49%	21
Reference to neurodiversity only	0.17%	1
Total		601

Are you aware if your force has specific guidance on reasonable adjustments?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	74.88%	450
Don't know	15.64%	94
No	9.48%	57
Total		601

Are you aware if your force has a disability passport in place?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	45.26%	272
Don't know	38.94%	234
No	15.81	95
Total		601

Does your force support adjustments to work as part of everyday business activity?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	75.54%	454
Don't know	13.48%	81
No	10.98%	66
Total		601

Do you think your force's approach to disability and neurodiversity is well understood by colleagues?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Limited understanding	67.39%	405
Well understood	16.14%	97
Very well understood	9.98%	60
Don't know	6.49%	39
Total		601

Do you think your force's approach to reasonable adjustments is well understood by colleagues?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Limited understanding	65.39%	393
Well understood	19.63%	118
Very well understood	8.99%	54
Don't know	5.99%	36
Total		601

How accessible is the information on reasonable adjustments for colleagues?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Accessible	30.95%	186
Not very accessible	21.96%	132
Difficult	18.47	111
Very accessible	16.31%	98
Don't know	12.31%	74
Total		601

Are you aware if your force has a staff network on disability?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	81.03%	487
Don't know	14.64%	88
No	2.83%	17
There is no staff network with a disability in this force	1.50%	9
Total		601

Are you aware if your force has a staff network on neurodiversity?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	41.26%	248
Don't know	36.77%	221
No	12.81%	77
There is no staff network on neurodiversity in this force	9.15%	55
Total		601

Have you ever applied for a reasonable adjustment?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	65.56%	394
No	34.44%	207
Total		601

If you have applied for a reasonable adjustment, how easy was it for you to raise your request?

Choices	Percentage	Count
N/a	31.95%	192
Very easy	18.97%	114
Easy	18.47%	112
Difficult	15.47%	93
Not very difficult	14.98%	90
Total		601

If you have not applied for a reasonable adjustment, would you feel confident to apply if you believed you would benefit?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	70.22%	422
Don't know	16.64%	100
No	13.14%	79
Total		601

Have you, or a colleague that you know about, ever had a reasonable adjustment request denied?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	68.72%	413
No	31.28%	188
Total		601

Does your force carry out disability awareness training?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	39.43%	237
Don't know	38.77%	233
No	21.08%	131
Total		601

If your force does carry out disability awareness training, does the training raise awareness of reasonable adjustments?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Don't know	55.74%	335
Yes	27.79%	167
No	16.47%	99
Total		601

If your force does carry out disability awareness training, does the training raise awareness of neurodiversity?

Choices	Percentage	Count
Don't know	58.04%	351
Yes	26.96%	162
No	14.64%	88
Total		601

Appendix 4: Benchmark organisations

In both the public and private sectors, the use of disability passports is becoming commonplace. As part of this discovery research, 11 examples were reviewed to help benchmark best practice and establish any gaps in the approach taken by the police force. The disability passports that were reviewed are listed below.

Organisation	Resource
Avon and Somerset Police	<u>Our inclusive culture</u>
Barclays	<u>Building disability and mental health confidence: Our journey to becoming an accessible and inclusive business</u>
BT	<u>Here for you</u>
JP Morgan	<u>Disability as an asset in the workplace</u>
Civil Service	<u>Workplace Adjustment Passport</u>
EY	<u>Diverse abilities: Leveraging all abilities to build high-performing organizations</u>
Fujitsu	<u>How we lit up purple to celebrate disability networks</u>
Royal College of Nursing	<u>Disability passport guidance</u>
Sodexo	<u>People with disabilities</u>
Lloyds Banking	<u>Disability</u>

Best-practice guidance strongly suggests that terminology used to create a passport should draw from the social model of disability. The colour purple is now adopted globally to provide a common connection point for the disability movement. DWP uses the phrase ‘purple pound’ to signify the collective spending power of people with disabilities, in a similar way to the ‘pink pound’ and ‘grey pound’. A phrase emerging in the private sector is the ‘Purple Passport’. This language is being used

to help shift cultures to a focus on what people can do, and to embed the passport as an inclusive approach that is light-touch rather than procedural. At its heart, the passport concept is based on mutuality. It was not designed to be a formal policy, and it is not stored or recorded centrally. It is owned by the individual, who has a responsibility to keep it up to date, and it is respected by the employer as an inclusive way of providing the correct support. This approach helps foster a culture of respect and understanding. Any reasonable adjustment provided is not a 'benefit' or 'perk'. Adjustments are provided so that people can perform to their best ability. Best-practice examples from the private sector use questions that are written in very positive terms.

Appendix 5: About PurpleSpace

PurpleSpace is the world's only professional development and networking hub for Disabled Employee Network/Resource Group leaders and their members as well as others who may have an interest in setting one up or supporting an employee network. Membership is available to anyone working in any sector or trade, and across the UK or globally. This includes private companies, government departments and agencies, police forces, NHS Trusts, colleges and universities, local authorities and charities. Members join in order to increase the effectiveness of their employee networks, develop their skills and learn how to help their organisations to become disability confident from the inside out. Membership gives access to all the tools and know-how to develop positive networks and great conversations to help disabled employees flourish at work.

#PurpleLightUp is a disabled employee-led global movement that celebrates the economic contribution of people with disabilities. It is a mark of respect to the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December each year. Networks, disabled people, allies, champions, employer brands and buildings are invited to do something to 'go purple' as we recognise the contribution disabled people make to economies and civil society. We believe the #PurpleLightUp movement will help build disability confidence across the globe. Members and non-members are encouraged to join this global movement, which we kicked off last year and will continue to grow over the coming years. #PurpleLightUp encourages everyone to notice and discuss the benefits of harnessing global purple talent and increases the visibility of networks/resource groups.

PurpleSpace team

Kate Nash OBE, CEO and Creator of PurpleSpace

Kate is the world's leading authority in 'Networkology' - the science behind the growth of workplace networks and resource groups. Most known for her work with disability networks, she set up an

independent hub of best practice in the establishment of Disabled Employee Networks publishing the first best practice guide in 2009, with a Ministerial launch. In April 2014 her book '[Secrets & Big News](#)' was published tackling the issue of 'disclosure' of disability and what employers can do to help people be themselves at work. 2,511 disabled employees from 55 employers took part in the research, sponsored by BT, Fujitsu, Metropolitan Police Service, Post Office and PWC. Kate launched PurpleSpace in October 2015 as the world's first professional development hub for disabled employee networks bringing together the 850,000 disabled employees from across employee networks. In 2007 she was awarded an OBE for services to disabled people. In 2013 she was appointed Ambassador to Disability Rights UK. At PurpleSpace you are most likely to find Kate inspiring Disability Employee Networks and Resource Groups and connecting and firing up a growing community of purple change agents across all sectors and industries.

Brendan Roach, Director of Strategy and Networkology at PurpleSpace

Brendan leads PurpleSpace's strategy to remain and grow the world's only network of disability employee networks and resource groups through the delivery of high-quality Learning & Development.

With 15 years' experience supporting organisations and government in the UK and internationally to improve disability confidence, Brendan is passionate about disability inclusion in business and on a mission to create impact at scale. A Dyslexic thinker with a gift for connecting people and ideas, Brendan is a born collaborator who loves working with others to make things happen.

Kay Allen OBE, Special Advisor to PurpleSpace

Kay gets excited by developing responsible business and diversity & inclusion strategies, doing in-depth meaningful research that uncovers the truth behind company barriers and enablers. Kay's purpose is to help others succeed: As a coach, she loves drawing on her past experience helping others use their talents to grow and develop. 25 years providing advice to business on how to ensure integrity, inclusion and sustainability are at the core of business growth plans. Supported Prime Minister Cameron from Number 10, looking at how businesses can help local communities, driving greater social responsibility as part of the Big Society. She serves as a panel member on Ofcom's Communications Consumer Panel.

Kay is a past Fellow of St Georges House Windsor, A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Listed in Who's Who since 2010. Kay has worked for B&Q, BSKYB and Royal Mail. She has been a Commissioner on the Disability Rights Commission and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. She also served as a Non-Executive Director on the Department for Work and Pensions PDCS Board.

She was awarded an OBE for services to Equality in 2010.

Robert Wemyss

Is a leading expert on accessibility and consultant and developer for the PurpleSpace platform.

About the College

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We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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