

Co-Producing an Inclusive Work Culture: Challenges and Opportunities

How can disability help us rethink accessibility, inclusion, and belonging in workplace cultures and environments?

WAARC Project

- **Priority Area 1.1: Recruitment**

- We aimed to address the under-recruitment of Disabled researchers and professional services staff due to systemic barriers.

- **Priority Area 1.2: Employment**

- We aimed to address the barriers that may be encountered when attempting to attract and retain Disabled researchers.

Disability and Employment

- Participating at work can enhance employees' self-confidence, feelings of social inclusion and citizenship.

6.9%

of Disabled people were unemployed in 2024 (versus 3.6% of non-disabled people) (Department for Work and Pensions, 2025)

Barriers at Work

- Irrelevant and inaccessible information
- Inaccessible physical workspaces
- Ableist attitudes

Reasonable Adjustments

- Changes made by an employer to **remove** or **reduce a disadvantage** related to someone's disability.
- For example:
 - Finding a **different way** to complete a task
 - Making **changes to the workplace** itself
 - Altering someone's **working arrangements**
 - Providing **equipment, services** or **support**

Inclusive Solutions

- To address gaps in information provision, institutions should ensure that information that would be useful to Disabled staff is provided **in concise language** and is **easy to find**.
- To address physical accessibility, institutional practice that **integrates accessibility** into new builds and refurbishments, and that considers ways to improve access in its estates strategies, is likely to be particularly effective.
- To address ableist attitudes, staff need to be supported, with **specific disability training**, to change their attitude **from tolerance to genuine inclusion**.

Benefits of an Inclusive Work Culture

- Welcoming and including all **needs, experiences** and **perspectives** would, ultimately, empower us to **co-produce a rich work culture** that allows everyone to nourish and flourish.





University of
Sheffield

Prompt Questions



Prompt Questions

1. How would you **foster an inclusive culture** in your own places of study/workplaces?
2. In what other ways can we use **disability as a tool for solidarity** and collective action?



University of Sheffield

Get in touch:

Dr. Armineh Soorenian

Wellcome Anti-Ableist Research Cultures (WAARC)

iHuman, University of Sheffield

a.soorenian@sheffield.ac.uk

<https://sheffield.ac.uk/ihuman/who-we-are/armineh-soorenian>

