

Becoming sustainable through inclusive employment practices

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To become or remain sustainable, I suggest that the archaeology sector must become more inclusive in the use of employment practices to both attract and retain disabled candidates, for both ethical and financial reasons.

Understanding the barriers

For disabled people, there are barriers not only to gaining employment in the sector but also to longer-term career development. These barriers start at the advertisement and recruitment stage and can continue in the workplace, causing issues with career progression and retention further down the line.

Why does the sector need to become more inclusive to achieve sustainability? The business case

The sector must become more inclusive to attract, retain and benefit from the skills, knowledge and experience of disabled people. This is both an ethical responsibility and a corporate social responsibility. Principle five of the ClfA Code of conduct covers matters relating to issues of equality of opportunity and employment, including career development, and is further supported by the ClfA policy statement on equal opportunities in archaeology – both of which individual ClfA members and Registered Organisations should adhere to.

Using inclusive employment practices attracts the right person for the right job. On average, disabled people also have less time off sick and are more likely to stay in a role longer, which means knowledge is retained and costs are saved in recruitment. Diversifying the workforce introduces a wider range of ideas and experience, which can drive innovation and avoid 'group think'. Gaining a



Sarahjayne recording at Digging Harlaxton 2022. Credit: Sarahjayne Clements

reputation as an inclusive employer can attract funders, customers and a wider range of candidates for job vacancies. Being an inclusive employer is proven to raise the morale of all staff and is therefore a benefit to everyone. Inclusive employment practices not only benefit disabled people –flexible working policies, for example, can also help those with caring responsibilities.

In turn, there are also financial benefits to hiring disabled candidates. A 2018 Accenture study showed that companies who embraced best practices for employing and supporting more disabled people in their workforce outperformed

their peers. On average, companies championing disability employment and inclusion reported 28 per cent higher revenue, double net income and 30 per cent higher profit margins.

How can the sector become more inclusive and therefore more sustainable?

Employers can become more inclusive and therefore more sustainable through utilising inclusive employment practices such as the use of inclusive language, training staff in disability awareness and training recruiters in recognising unconscious bias. Other examples are

encouraging different application formats, covering travel to interview costs, providing an online interview option, and providing questions beforehand. Accommodations are very much individual.

Providing a variety of roles at entry level to the sector and undertaking a company-wide gap analysis are further examples of inclusive practice. Other examples of inclusive archaeological practice can be found on the ClfA equality, diversity, and inclusion webpages: www.archaeologists.net/practices/equality/resources/disability

‘Through identifying and removing the barriers disabled candidates face, your organisation will attract and retain unimaginable talent’ (Hatton 2020).



Sarahjayne speaking at the 2022 SAA conference. Credit: Sarahjayne Clements

Sarahjayne in her adapted home office. Credit: Sarahjayne Clements



Examples of inclusive employment practices

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<p>Advertisement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify training for managers/HR staff. Use of inclusive language. Proactively offering alternative application formats. 	<p>Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before – offering questions and explaining the format. During – allowing notes/note taking. After – feedback. 	<p>Onboarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough induction. Regular team meetings and check-ins. Reasonable adjustments. Being aware of schemes to help such as Access to Work. 	<p>Training/CPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering internal/external opportunities. Fosters feeling valued and aids with retention and career progression. 	<p>Retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering an inclusive atmosphere. Educating whole of workforce. Reassess reasonable adjustment eg phased returns to work.

Further reading

Hatton, J, 2020 *A Dozen Great Ways to Recruit Disabled People*. Elite Publishing Academy
 Kennedy, T, 2018 *Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage*. Accenture Research.



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Sarahjayne presented this paper at the ClfA 2023 conference in Nottingham as part of the *Inclusive futures* session.