

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 17/09/2025

Subject: Disability Confident Leader

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Responsible Director: Sukvinder Kalsi, Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services

SUMMARY

We are delighted to share that we have officially been recognised as a **Disability Confident Leader**—the highest level of accreditation within the UK Government's Disability Confident scheme.

This milestone reflects our commitment to creating an inclusive, accessible, and supportive environment for all colleagues, customers, and community members.

Becoming a Disability Confident Leader is not just a badge of honour—it is a testament to the values we live by. It demonstrates that we are not only meeting but exceeding best practices in recruiting, retaining, and developing Disabled people. It also means we are actively championing disability inclusion across our networks and encouraging others to follow suit.

The external validator for our submission said, *'You have clearly been on an amazing journey to support not only colleagues and candidates but the boroughs service users. You are partnering intelligently and using the co-production models to hugely good effect. You should be very proud of what has been a serious commitment'*.

This achievement is the result of collective effort, continuous learning, and a shared belief that diversity strengthens our organisation. We look forward to building on this momentum and continuing to lead by example.

Wards Affected: None

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Corporate Plan and the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Working with local SMEs, local jobs for local people, supporting returners to work and unemployment.

Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	Compassion and inclusivity form a key part of how the Council approaches employment programmes, recruitment activity and the full employee life cycle based on equal, fair treatment to all.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Resident engagement form part of the Council's approach to activities engaging those affected by changes.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Ensuring continued governance of workforce spend against employment programmes, recruitment activity and the full employee life cycle.
Taking pride in H&F	Residents can take pride the approach the Council is taking to create an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Minimising the impacts on climate change across agendas' forms part of the Council's approach.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

1. In 2022, we proudly announced that Hammersmith & Fulham had achieved **Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)** status. At that time, we recognised the immense value and talent that Disabled people bring to our workplace and committed ourselves to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.
2. Through rigorous self-assessment, we demonstrated our dedication to recruiting, retaining, and developing disabled colleagues—changing attitudes, behaviours, and cultures across our organisation and community.
3. Our commitment to being an inclusive, equitable, and forward-thinking employer is embedded in everything we do. Through a wide range of accessible employment programmes, inclusive recruitment practices, and a culture rooted in co-production and lived experience, we are actively removing barriers and creating meaningful opportunities for all.
4. We have officially been recognised as a **Disability Confident Leader**—the highest level of accreditation within the UK Government's Disability Confident scheme.
5. To achieve Disability Confident Leader status (Level 3) through the Disability Confident scheme, we followed a structured process that builds on the commitments we made at Levels 1 and 2 including external validation of our self-assessment that provides evidence on our inclusive practices, leadership and reporting.
6. As a Level 3 Disability Confident Leader, we are proud to lead by example ensuring that Disabled people are not only included but empowered to thrive.

7. Our partnerships, training, digital tools, and wellbeing initiatives reflect a whole-organisation approach to equity and inclusion.
8. By continuing to invest in our people, listen to our communities, and share best practice across the sector, we are building a workplace and a borough where everyone can belong, contribute, and succeed.
9. H&F offers a range of programmes to support diverse entry points into employment including:
 - **Work Experience Programme** - Provides placements for H&F residents, care-experienced young people and SEND learners, helping bridge the gap between education and employment.
 - **Supported Internship Programme** - Delivered in partnership with **Action on Disability (AoD)** and **West London College (WLC)**, this programme supports young adults (16–24) with learning disabilities through work placements, employability qualifications, and pathways to paid employment or apprenticeships.
 - **Earn While You Learn** - Offers accessible apprenticeships from **GCSE to Masters level**, with tailored adjustments provided by H&F and education partners. Part of the H&F Academy and Upstream London to ensure shared prosperity.
10. We are embedding inclusive practices throughout the recruitment and employment lifecycle through:
 - **Inclusive Recruitment**
 - Guaranteed interviews for Disabled candidates who meet essential criteria.
 - Pre-interview contact to identify and implement reasonable adjustments.
 - Disability Confident badge displayed on job adverts and recruitment communications.
 - **Workplace Adjustments** - Delivered through Microlink, including assessments, equipment, ergonomic aids, and Access to Work support.
 - **Manager Training** - Mandatory Disability, Equity & Co-production training, with refresher workshops on autism, dementia, and Alzheimer's.
 - **Accessibility & Digital Inclusion**
 - **Preparing for a Recruitment Platform Audit** - With Microlink and Disabled staff we will be auditing the platform to identify and improve accessibility and user experience.
 - **Read&Write Tool** - A digital tool available to all staff, supporting neurodiverse and Disabled colleagues without requiring disclosure.

- **Wellbeing Passport** - A transferable document that outlines an employee's condition, support needs, and guidance for wellbeing which has been piloted and will be launched more widely.
- **Learning & Internal Progression** H&F supports continuous development and career progression through:
 - **Get Ahead Programme** - Prioritises internal applicants and offers career coaching.
 - **MentorConnect** - Enables staff to select mentors based on shared characteristics and lived experience.
 - **Leadership Development** Includes “Be a Leader, Build a Leader” and other mentoring schemes.
 - **Learning Zone** - Offers training on disability etiquette, neurodiversity, inclusive customer service, and more.
- **Wellbeing & Support**
 - **Employee Assistance Programme** - 24/7 confidential support for personal and work-related issues.
 - **Wellness Centre** - Occupational health support including lifestyle advice, immunisations, and health assessments.
 - **Wellbeing Champions** - Trained in Mental Health First Aid, offering peer support across departments.
 - **Wellbeing Wednesdays** - Inclusive sessions covering topics such as mental health, menopause, HIV awareness, and more.
- **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) in Action**
 - **Disability Equity Network (DEN)** - A staff-led group promoting the **Social Model of Disability**, providing a platform for lived experience and influencing policy.
 - **Pulse Surveys** - Used to gather insights and improve workplace culture.
 - **Policy Integration** - Inclusive practices embedded in recruitment, development, and organisational policies.
- **Co-Production & Community Engagement** -H&F champions the principle of “**Nothing about Disabled People without Disabled People**” through:
 - **Resident led commissioning and co-production groups** - Including Civic Campus, Housing Strategy, Digital Accessibility, and Inclusive Design.
 - **Tools for Inclusion** - A **Barriers Map** and **Co-production Checklist** ensure accessible and inclusive engagement.
 - **Award-Winning Projects** - The Civic Campus, co-designed with Disabled residents, won the **NLA People's Choice Award (2020)**.
- **Collaboration & Best Practice Sharing**
 - **Joint Delivery** - Through H&F Works, People & Talent, People Services (Childrens & Adults), Parents Active and partners such as **Shaw Trust** and **Jobcentre Plus**.

- **Community Engagement** - Active participation in job fairs, school events, and employment workshops.
 - **Sector Leadership** - Sharing best practice through **London Councils**, **LGA webinars**, and national blogs (e.g., *Growing Our Own*).
 - **Macbeth Centre** - Provides SEND-focused courses that support progression into employment or higher education.
11. Achieving Disability Confident Leader status is a proud moment for Hammersmith & Fulham—but it is not the end of our journey. It is a powerful affirmation of the inclusive culture we have built, and a call to continue to push boundaries, removing barriers, and champion equity at every level of our organisation.
 12. As we look ahead, our focus remains on momentum, sharing what works, and amplifying the voices of Disabled people in everything we do.
 13. We are committed to being a bold, inclusive employer and a leader in disability equity—not just in words, but in action. Together, with our staff, partners, and community, we will continue to build a borough where everyone can belong, contribute, and thrive.