

# Networking event is a unique opportunity for Yorkshire employers

EFD launched its first Yorkshire network event at Bradford City Football Club at the end of January with the help of minister for disabled people Anne McGuire.

Nicola Swan, EFD deputy chief executive, said the event enabled employers to learn how to meet the needs of disabled customers and employees. "We are providing a networking opportunity for Yorkshire businesses to share best practice on disability," she said.

"This is the first networking event in Yorkshire for EFD, but it won't be the last. Yorkshire and Humber is a key region for UK plc, and we are looking forward to future events that will engage our members in the region and enable them to recruit more disabled people into their business."

Financial services institution and EFD member Bradford & Bingley sponsored the 29 January launch of the Yorkshire network.

Diversity manager Sharon Pegg said: "Bradford & Bingley is committed to disabled issues



**McGuire: welcomed EFD Yorkshire network**

and always looking at new initiatives for our disabled colleagues and customers alike. By working together we can learn a great deal from each other."

Other speakers at the event included director of diversity consultancy Freeney Williams and EFD associate Rick Williams and Sue Maynard Campbell, managing director of Yorkshire-based disability consultancy Equal Ability CIC.

EFD plans to hold its next Scottish and Welsh network events in the summer.

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Networking across the world



## 18 Interview

EFD president John Varley



## Reactions to DWP's plans

We report on page 4 that the Department of Work and Pensions is currently seeking views on reform of its disability employment services. The proposals in the consultation paper, 'Improving specialist disability employment services', cover the Job Introduction Scheme, Work Preparation, Workstep, Access to Work and the role of Jobcentre Plus disability employment advisers.

According to minister for disabled people Anne McGuire, "The proposals are designed to create a more flexible, easy-to-use service that is better at enabling Jobcentre Plus frontline staff and our external partners to meet the needs of individual disabled people and their employers." Do you agree?

We are intending to make a formal response to the government's proposals, but we need to know what EFD members think first. Please respond to Nick Bason at [nick.bason@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:nick.bason@employers-forum.co.uk) by 18 February.

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# Message to employers: most of the obstacles are in your mind

Employers, not government, should be taking the lead in boosting employment opportunities for disabled people, according to Barclays group chief executive and EFD president John Varley.

“We are in the throes of specifying how we as employers can help. When we have done that we will, of course, look to the government to respond. At the moment I feel the obligation is with us in business to state how we can get more people with disabilities into work,” he said.

In a wide-ranging interview for ‘Update’, Varley outlined the business case for taking disability seriously. “In the United Kingdom around 18 per cent of the population has a disability and an even bigger percentage has somebody with a disability as part of their family. The chance to serve customers with disabilities represents a big commercial opportunity,” he said.

As for employees, Varley added, “If we are going to be expert at what we do, we have to have the best people, and the best people are to be found in the most diverse pools.”

Varley said that the evidence from UK employers that “are serious about employing



**Varley: serving customers with disabilities is a big opportunity**

people with disabilities” showed that “progress is being made”. But he admitted that there was much work to be done: “Have we achieved the level of success that we should? No, but there are no obstacles that are insuperable. Most of the obstacles to employers are in the mind.”

Turning to his own company, Varley said that since he became group chief executive in 2004 Barclays had made less progress in the disability arena than elsewhere: “It’s absolutely right to have disability as part of that equality and diversity agenda, but you need specialist knowledge, techniques and resources to advance each of those agenda items.”

**Turn to page 18 to read the full interview with John Varley**

# Disability 'leads to poverty trap'

Disabled people are twice as likely to live in poverty as non-disabled people, according to a report from Leonard Cheshire Disability released at the beginning of January.

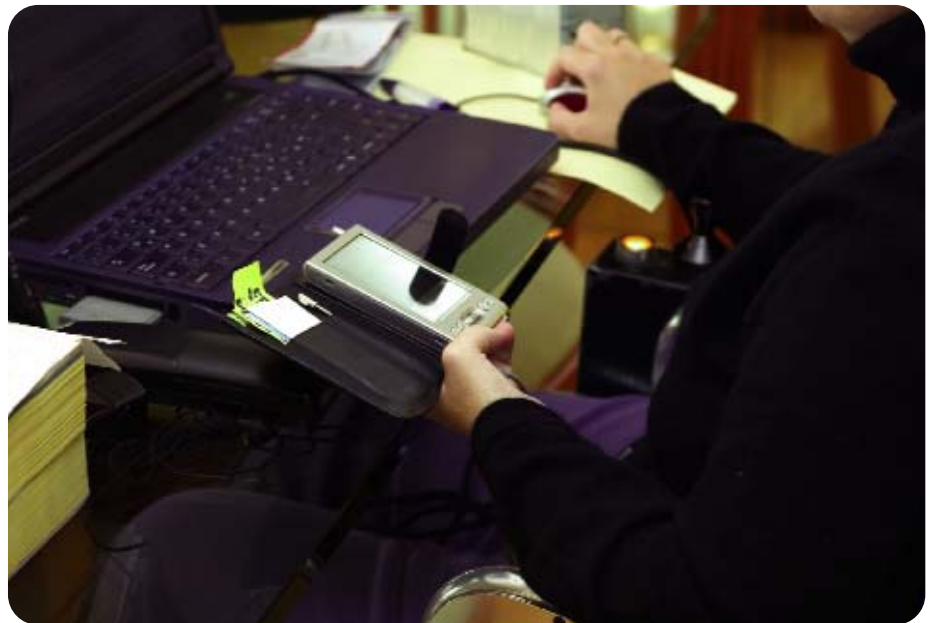
Continuing low levels of employment mean that many disabled people are trapped in inescapable poverty, said the report, 'Disability poverty in the UK'. It estimates there are 3 million disabled people living in relative poverty in the UK.

"Disability poverty is one of the most significant and most challenging problems facing the UK today. The failure to specifically tackle disability poverty represents a gaping hole in the government's otherwise strong record on poverty," said report author Guy Parckar, the charity's public policy manager.

The report notes that half of disabled people are not in work. Those that work are more likely to be in low-skill, low-paid jobs. It calls on employers to "adhere to their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, and extend the anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments to employment".

Other recommendations include greater support for the Access to Work scheme and the introduction of rehabilitation leave to help newly disabled people to remain in work.

The case for addressing disability poverty is not only one of basic social justice,



**Leonard Cheshire: more jobs for disabled people would boost economy**

there is also an economic case, said the report.

It suggests that if a million disabled people moved into work, the Treasury could

expect to gain more than £5 billion in income tax alone.

**For more information about 'Disability poverty in the UK', visit [www.lcdisability.org](http://www.lcdisability.org)**

## Disfigurement 'not a priority'

Disfigurement is not always recognised by employers as a major disability issue, according to Changing Faces.

The disfigurement charity is carrying out a survey of people's experiences in employment. It focuses on whether face judgments are made during the recruitment process and whether disfigurement affects career prospects. From the results, the charity intends to identify priority areas that employers need to address.

Changing Faces head of professional development

Henrietta Spalding said: "I expect that the anecdotal experience that we have heard for the last 15 years will be reinforced, so we will find that people are being unfairly treated at work and that people are not being recruited because of the way they look.

"Anecdotally, we know that people who are trying to apply for work, for example, will often find that if they put that they have a disability on their CV they may not be called for interview."

**For more information, visit [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)**

# Ministers aim to streamline disability job creation service

The Department of Work and Pensions is seeking views on changes to the Access to Work scheme in its consultation paper, 'Improving specialist disability employment services'.

"The proposals are designed to create a more flexible, easy-to-use service that is better at enabling Jobcentre Plus frontline staff and our external partners to meet the needs of individual disabled people and their employers," said minister for disabled people Anne McGuire.

Access to Work provides support to more than 24,000 people. From October 2006, ministerial departments have had to pay for disability adjustments needed by their staff from their own budgets rather than using Access to Work funds. The DWP wants to extend this to all central government departments and the wider public sector.

'Improving specialist disability employment services' covers other areas of Access to Work and asks for views on the speed of delivery, consistency of decision-making and level of employer contributions. It also proposes replacing the Job Introduction Scheme and Workstep and enhancing the role of Jobcentre Plus disability employment advisers.

EFD is looking for members' views to incorporate into a formal response. Members

intending to respond directly are asked to let EFD know. EFD needs to receive members' views by 18 February to meet the 10 March deadline.

- The Department of Health is consulting on priorities for

addressing learning disabilities. One aim in 'Valuing people now' is finding more jobs for people with learning disabilities. EFD needs members' views by 7 March to meet the 28 March deadline.

**Members wanting to submit views should contact Nick Bason at [nick.bason@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:nick.bason@employers-forum.co.uk). The two consultation papers are at [www.dwp.gov.uk/resourcecentre/des-consultation.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/resourcecentre/des-consultation.asp) and [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH\\_081014](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_081014)**

## On the road to disability awareness

The well-received 'Realising potential' tour to raise awareness of disability issues continues to run around the country.

Rick Williams, managing director of disability consultancy Freeney Williams and an EFD associate, is running the events. "They are great for finding out more about employing disabled people. We explore why becoming disability confident is a business issue. I like to make the events challenging but fun as well," he said.

'Realising potential' is run in partnership by EFD, the National Employment Panel



**Williams: aims to make the events challenging but fun**

and Jobcentre Plus. The remaining events, which are free, are being held at:

- St David's Hotel, Cardiff, 8.30-10.45am, 15 February
- Paramount Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, 8-10.15am, 20 and 21 February

All participants get a copy of 'The knowledge', EFD's best practice publication. There is also time to network with other employers and find out how Jobcentre Plus can help.

**For more details, email [Genelva.Meikle@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Genelva.Meikle@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or call her at the National Employment Panel on 020 7238 0704**

# Stripping away the myths about stress

EFD's 'Handling stress in the workplace' conference gave around 100 delegates the opportunity to find out more about an often ambiguous subject.

Unum chief medical officer Professor Mike O'Donnell explained that stress is not a disability. "There is much talk about stress as a cause of health problems and many people, including doctors, use the term as a label for illness," he said.

"Stress is subjective and the perception of it in any individual is dependent on a number of things, such as home life, money worries and work. What we can be sure of is that being out of work is much more dangerous to health than being in work."

No matter the vagueness of the term, stress is a serious occupational health problem. Almost 13 million working days a year are lost to stress, depression and anxiety in the



**O'Donnell: stress is a serious occupational health problem**

UK, at a cost to business of around £3.7 billion.

The conference was held in London last November and sponsored by income protection providers Unum. Other speakers included EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker, EFD associate Phil Friend and BT's Mike Wagland.

**For more information, visit the Health and Safety Executive's website [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress); Unum's website is at [www.unum.co.uk](http://www.unum.co.uk)**

## How to create a less stressful workplace

- Avoid a narrow view of work — this only serves to heighten people's fears about the effects of work on their health
- Accommodate employees with flexible working
- Improve job satisfaction
- Create an atmosphere where employees can speak freely about difficulties
- Encourage workers with stress to identify the causes and adopt a problem-solving approach

### Visitors to EFD's website

[www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk) can now listen to the latest EFD news, thanks to Browsealoud text-to-speech software from Texthelp Systems. The software is available as a free download.

● [www.browsealoud.com](http://www.browsealoud.com)

### Some £13 billion could be

added to the economy by improving the employability of disabled people, said the Social Market Foundation. It added that the UK's 10 million disabled people are also a significant customer base: "Leading companies say that a workforce which reflects their customer base is more likely to get the business than ones that don't."

● [www.smf.co.uk](http://www.smf.co.uk)

### 'Ability', a quarterly magazine

about IT for disabled people, offers interviews, case studies and news on technology. The corporate rate for 'Ability' is £150, entitling subscribers to five print copies and an electronic edition. However, 'Ability' is now available to EFD members for £135.

● **For details, email [john.lamb@abilitymagazine.org.uk](mailto:john.lamb@abilitymagazine.org.uk)**

### A service to assess and map

accessible routes between Tube station entrances and platforms has won a medal at the Visit London Awards 2007. London Underground commissioned Direct Enquiries to provide an interactive service to enable people with mobility problems to find the best routes. Users can choose routes that match their needs. The site also includes information on the number of steps, lifts, escalators, walking distances, ramps and platform-to-train gaps.

● **Visit the service at [www.directenquiries.com](http://www.directenquiries.com)**

# Awards for Sussex Police and IHG

Two EFD members — Sussex Police and InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) — have been honoured at the Radar People of the Year Human Rights Awards.

Sussex Police picked up the disability equality scheme award at the ceremony, held in London, in December. The award is made to a public body that has proven its commitment to implementing the disability equality duty.

Developing an emergency mobile phone text service and including sign language video clips on its website were just two innovations that helped Sussex Police win the award.

“I am convinced that by collaborating with communities and partners, as we did here

with disabled people and East Sussex Disability Association, we can look confidently to the future,” said deputy chief constable Geoff Williams.



Disability equality scheme:  
Sussex Police win award

InterContinental Hotels scooped the employment award. The judging panel was impressed by the company’s dedication to creating a workplace where employees enjoy their work, are encouraged to achieve their best and want to remain in an organisation that values their involvement.

“While it’s our policy to get the right person for the job, disabled people are typically committed and loyal to their jobs,” said Christopher Rawstron, vice president operations UK and Ireland. “Recruiting disabled people allows us to access a wide and rich pool of talent.”

Radar is a national network of disability organisations and disabled people.

## ‘Mental health needs more resources’

Employers must take a more positive approach to employees with mental health problems, according to EFD.

In ‘Recruitment and mental health’, a report published with the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health and launched on World Mental Health Day last October, EFD also called on the government to put more emphasis on mental health in its disability awareness campaigns and to offer more support for employers through recruitment services.

“Most employers are probably employing people who have had depression, anxiety and

other mental health problems — and they don’t even realise it. Employers need a central source of advice to go to on employing people with mental health problems,” said EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker.

Mental health problems account for around a third of sickness absence, costing business approximately £4 billion a year. But, argued Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health chief executive Angela Greatley, people with mental

health problems can, with the right support, be as productive as any of their colleagues.

“Up to a million adults with mental health problems are out of work. This is an avoidable waste of skills, knowledge and potential,” said Greatley. “Employers can benefit by ensuring they support staff when they experience mental distress and from giving people with a history of mental health problems a fair chance to get a job.”

**For an online copy of the report, email [issy.rule@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:issy.rule@employers-forum.co.uk); for more information on the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, go to [www.scmh.org.uk](http://www.scmh.org.uk)**



Joey Stevenson, Robert Marshall and Janet Donaldson from the Holiday Inn Edinburgh receive their award from TV 'dragon' Richard Farleigh

## Edinburgh's Holiday Inn impresses Remploy judges

An Edinburgh Holiday Inn, which is part of EFD gold member InterContinental Hotels, won the innovation category at Remploy's Leading the Way awards last October.

"The investment by the hotel into recruiting, educating and

retaining disabled people, and the impact it has made in the local community, really was trailblazing," said Remploy chief executive Bob Warner.

Richard Farleigh, a former judge on BBC2's 'Dragons' Den', presented staff from the hotel with the award.

Awards were also on offer in five other categories: learning, retention and small, medium and large businesses. Winners included EFD members Morgan Stanley, Glasgow (learning) and the Civil Service – Royal Navy, Portsmouth (large business).

"Thanks to the example many of you have set, more employers understand the benefits of employing disabled people and helping to create a level playing field for disabled job seekers," said Warner.

Remploy's awards recognise employers and individuals who have made significant efforts in encouraging diversity.

### Online accessibility

Browsealoud and the Shaw Trust are hosting an 'Accessibility in 2008 information day' to highlight the importance of accessible websites. Speakers at the event, to be held on 27 February at the Hilton Metropole Hotel, Birmingham, will offer their first-hand experience of making the online world accessible.

For more details, go to [www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk) or [www.browsealoud.com](http://www.browsealoud.com)

**BT has launched an online toolkit** to help designers develop products that can be used by disabled people. The site, [www.inclusivedesigntoolkit.com](http://www.inclusivedesigntoolkit.com), provides a guide to the principles and commercial benefits of inclusive design. "Disabled people want to take advantage of new communication technologies just like everyone else," said BT inclusive design champion Steve Andrews.

**Last November almost 100** disabled students and recent graduates attended InvestAbility 2007, a two-day event promoting a career in investment banking. Nine banks – ABN Amro, Barclays Capital, Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Royal Bank of Scotland and UBS – joined forces in an event organised by the Interbank Graduate Diversity Recruiters Forum and EmployAbility, a charity that helps people with disabilities into employment.

• [www.employ-ability.org.uk](http://www.employ-ability.org.uk)

**Investment bank and EFD gold** group member Merrill Lynch launched its disability awareness professional network in January. Gill Hicks, a survivor of the 7 July London bombings, was one of the speakers. For more information on the Interbank Accessibility Group please contact Nick Bason, email [nick.bason@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:nick.bason@employers-forum.co.uk)

**Apologies to Nationwide and Gwent Police**, both of which took part in EFD's shadowing disabled people at work programme last year. Their names were omitted from a list of participants in our report on the programme ('Update', summer 2007, page 12).

# Don't dilute the public sector duty, MPs are urged

EFD called on MPs to maintain the public sector duty at a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Disability late last November.

Under proposals contained in the Single Equality Bill, the duty will be scrapped in favour of a single equality duty.

In a half-hour briefing to the group, which is chaired by Labour peer Lord Ashley of Stoke, EFD deputy chief executive Niccola Swan and head of communications and marketing Catherine Grinyer

presented the results of EFD's Disability Standard 2007.

The survey revealed that public sector employers outperform the private sector on disability in most areas. Some 50 per cent of public sector organisations have board level responsibility for disability, compared to 43 per cent of private sector companies.

"The results show that the public sector is more successful at getting it right on disability," said Grinyer. "The public sector is setting the standard for the private sector

in many areas. However, this momentum will be lost if the public sector duty is not maintained."

It is expected that the Single Equality Bill, which was dropped from last year's Queen's Speech, will be published this November.

More than 100 organisations, employing two million people across the United Kingdom, took part in the Disability Standard 2007. The standard enables employers to measure and improve their performance on disability.

## Top executive joins broadcasting network

EFD has appointed senior television executive Clare Morrow as manager of its Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN).

Morrow has spent over 20 years working at ITV and the BBC, where she started her career. Until April last year, she was controller of programmes north for ITV.



Morrow: aiming to build on the industry's successes

Morrow was a diversity champion at ITV, increasing the employment and portrayal of people with disabilities and from ethnic minorities at the channel.

"I am delighted to be joining the network at a time when I believe the broadcasters want to find ways to involve more people with disabilities in their programming and production teams," she said. "The industry has had some notable successes in this area, and I'm very keen to work with it to build on those and make a real difference."

The BCIDN brings together major broadcasters to boost the recruitment of disabled people and to promote best practice. It also aims to offer a more accurate representation of people with disabilities in the media.

Morrow is a non-executive director of Yorkshire Tourist Board and a trustee of Rett Syndrome Association UK, a national charity that helps people with the syndrome, a complex neurological disorder that affects mainly girls.



Jo Kenrick of B&Q



Jonathan Britton of Barclays



Steve Barnett of NHS Employers

## New appointments to board

EFD has announced three new additions to its board — B&Q’s Jo Kenrick, Steve Barnett of NHS Employers and Jonathan Britton of Barclays — bringing top-level leadership and advice to the organisation.

Kenrick is B&Q’s marketing and customer proposition director and was previously marketing director of the National Lottery. “With B&Q’s heritage of employing older workers, it is the age-related disabilities that many people develop which are especially relevant to us,” she said. “B&Q wholeheartedly supports EFD’s work, and this is a fascinating opportunity to be involved with a unique organisation.”

“NHS Employers has a great deal to contribute to EFD’s work and the disability agenda more broadly. As the UK’s largest employer, it is essential that the NHS works proactively to promote equality for disabled people,” said Barnett, director of NHS Employers.

Barclays group financial controller Britton said: “As a

parent of a child with severe learning difficulties I have a personal interest in the work of EFD. Barclays is a keen supporter of the objectives of EFD and I am pleased to have been asked to contribute to that support.”

EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker welcomed the new members, adding: “We are

extremely pleased that Jo, Steve and Jonathan have joined our board.

“In doing so they demonstrate a top-level commitment to becoming disability confident, while helping their own businesses realise the potential of disabled people as employees, customers, service users and valued stakeholders.”

news

### in brief

**Richard Dixon, a secondee from the Serious Organised Crime Agency, is EFD’s new police and law enforcement network co-ordinator. A founder member of SOCA’s disability network group, he said: “I am looking forward to meeting with other relevant agencies in furtherance of best practice and to a new and challenging sphere of work.”**

● See page 26 for more on EFD gold member SOCA

**John Warburton has joined EFD as its first recruitment consultant on secondment from Jobcentre**

Plus. Working closely with Jobcentre Plus, Warburton will develop EFD’s ‘Recruitment that works’ model. He says he is looking forward to “tackling the challenging task of getting more disabled people back into employment”.

● See page 11 for more details

**EFD would also like to welcome Louise Wright, civil service network co-ordinator, a secondee from the Department for Work and Pensions. New staff are Barnaby Powell, HR administrative assistant; Leander Feltham and Keith Harris, account managers; Suzi Mackenzie, key projects co-ordinator; Reza Bacchus, interim finance manager; Brendan Roach, disability directions adviser; and Helen Robertson, finance assistant.**

# Staff with dyslexia gain from openness

“With the right support and reasonable adjustments, dyslexia need not pose a barrier to success in employment,” head of legal policy and information services Bela Gor told delegates at EFD’s conference on ‘Recruiting and retaining people with dyslexia’.

The event, which was held in central London last October and sponsored by KMPG, aimed to increase delegates’ understanding of dyslexia — and dispel some of the myths.

Up to 10 per cent of the UK population have dyslexia, a learning difficulty that mainly



Left to right: Julie Bennett, UK health and well-being manager, KPMG; Bela Gor, head of legal policy and information services, EFD; Phil Friend, director of Minty and Friend and EFD associate; Karen Byrne, health and well-being adviser, KPMG

affects reading and spelling. But dyslexia is not a sign of low intelligence — people of all academic abilities can be dyslexic without having difficulties in any other area.

“More than half of people with dyslexia hide their condition through fear of discrimination,”

warned Julie Bennett, UK health and well-being manager at KPMG. “Employers need to take a responsible approach to ensure their staff are able to discuss openly the support they need in order to reach their full potential,” she said.

Carol Leather, training director for Independent Dyslexia Consultants, said: “Dyslexia is a hidden disability which is very often misunderstood. Supporting dyslexic people involves recognising and valuing their difference.”

Scott Weston, a community support officer at Hampshire Constabulary, spoke about his experience of dyslexia. “The police work with me to adapt things that will enable me to do my job: staff help read my emails, I have a quiet room to do my work and will soon have voice recognition software. If others [with dyslexia] had this they would not doubt their abilities,” he said.

## How to manage attendance

The latest EFD line manager guide, ‘Attendance management and disability’, will be published in February. Written in plain English and illustrated with cartoons and case studies, it is essential reading for managers who want to ‘get it right’ for their disabled colleagues.

The guide will make it easier for line managers to:

- recognise the first signs of disability

- distinguish when absence may be caused by a disability
- maximise the potential of disabled employees
- learn how to manage absence
- keep within discrimination law
- know where to seek advice

EFD would like to thank Unum for its sponsorship of the new guide, which will be launched officially on 13 February at a dinner held by the sponsors.

**For more information, contact the EFD publications team on 020 7089 2410 or email [publications@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:publications@employers-forum.co.uk)**

## Profile

# Recruitment specialist is aiming to boost partnerships

Employers' Forum on Disability has gained valuable recruitment expertise in the form of John Warburton, who joined the organisation on a 12-month secondment from Jobcentre Plus last November.

"I am delighted that John is joining us as a recruitment consultant. We will be able to add value for our members with the bespoke recruitment consultancy John is able to offer," said EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker.

"His experience in Jobcentre Plus and in pioneering the original 'recruitment that works' projects for EFD make him an ideal candidate for the job. We are grateful to Jobcentre Plus for the secondment," she added.

Jobcentre Plus is a government agency that helps people move from welfare into work and is part of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Over the years, the Bolton-born Warburton has worked closely with EFD. He was a key adviser on the DWP's Tripod project, which examined ways to help employers employ more people with disabilities.

Warburton says he is looking forward to "tackling the challenging task of getting more disabled people back into employment. I will be working with EFD members, particularly those already in partnership with Jobcentre Plus or in a Local Employer Partnership. We need to work more effectively with intermediaries so that we can systematically recruit more disabled people."

Warburton's role will be to develop recruitment strategies that enable EFD members to employ more people with disabilities. EFD says he will



**John Warburton: consulting members on recruitment**

bring a thorough approach to designing employer partnerships, making it easier for EFD members to navigate and improve their performance in this complex area.

An important part of the work will be connecting with a broad range of intermediary organisations such as Jobcentre Plus and the Pathways contractors to design workable recruitment solutions for employers.

But Warburton also has a more personal interest in disability issues: "I've seen the impact disability can have on my closest friends. I have a teacher friend who, because of mental health problems, couldn't cope with classroom behaviour and lost his job. By going through a good work-related programme he got back into work with a leading retail company. He had lost his self-respect, but now he's built it up again."

**To discuss your future recruitment strategy, contact John Warburton at [john.warburton@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:john.warburton@employers-forum.co.uk)**

“ We need to work more effectively with intermediaries so that we can systematically recruit more disabled people ”

# Opening up the countryside

Issy Rule finds out how accessible the nation's countryside and buildings really are for people with disabilities

You would think that improving access to the countryside would be an uncontroversial matter. Think again. "Stiles and kissing gates are the latest aspects of country life to fall victim to political correctness," thundered 'The Times' last November in response to the plans of some councils to replace traditional gates with ones that allow wheelchair access.

Employers' Forum on Disability member Suffolk County Council is currently looking at replacement gates that will allow wheelchair access while keeping livestock secure. But it points out that no farmers are going to be forced to remove and replace all their stiles and gates.

"As things get replaced, we just want to encourage facilities that are more in tune with disabled access. We want to encourage people to the countryside, and it is quite right that something should be done," says Guy McGregor, the councillor responsible for roads and transport.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) every provider of goods and services has to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled

“Natural England has produced guidance for countryside and urban green space managers and landowners to help them improve the accessibility of sites, routes and facilities”

## How the National Trust is aiming to remove barriers



©NTPL/DAVID LEVENSON

A National Trust volunteer with a visually impaired visitor at Osterley Park, West London

The National Trust owns more than 300 historic houses and gardens and 49 industrial monuments and mills around the UK. The charity also cares for some 700 miles of coastline and 250,000 hectares of countryside.

"We have a duty to enable access to our properties for everyone. How we go about implementing increased accessibility can create some real challenges, but at the same time imaginative solutions emerge," says Heather Smith, the trust's head of access for all.

Smith says that the trust is endeavouring to make its

historic houses, gardens and monuments more accessible to people with disabilities. It is using an assessment process to remove both the physical and intellectual barriers to access.

"Undertaking this assessment with disability groups starts to create all sorts of opportunities that can actually benefit all visitors," adds Smith. The trust has run a series of workshops for staff and volunteers to develop this assessment process. It also offers disability awareness training delivered by disabled people.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

people can receive the same levels of service as non-disabled people.

Accessibility to public open space should form a core part of a local authority's disability equality scheme. Disabled people should also expect that heritage sites and buildings of historical interest are, at least to some extent, accessible.

While there are restrictions on altering listed buildings, they are not exempt from the DDA, which requires that "alternative but effective solutions may be considered to reconcile the issues of accessibility and conservation".

EFD member Natural England is the public body responsible for maintaining the country's natural environment and promoting access and enjoyment of the countryside. It has produced guidance for countryside and urban green space managers and landowners to help them improve the accessibility of sites, routes and facilities.

"The evidence shows that when people with disabilities gain access to the countryside their confidence grows. And as more disabled people visit the countryside, the more service providers feel confident to engage with disabled visitors," says Jacqui Stearn, diversity action plan project manager at Natural England.

In 2006 EFD took part in a public consultation on the best ways to encourage young people, people with disabilities and those from inner cities and black and ethnic minority communities to visit and enjoy local green spaces and the English countryside.

EFD welcomed the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs draft action plan 'Outdoors for all?' but noted that some obstacles remain unaddressed; for example, only 2 per cent of UK accommodation has been assessed as being accessible for people with disabilities.

Replacing old stiles and gates is a start, but there is much work to be done before the countryside is opened up for disabled people.

**Direct Enquiries' Nationwide Access Register carries information on organisations' disabled access and facilities: [www.directenquiries.com](http://www.directenquiries.com)**

**EFD's response to 'Outdoors for all?' is available at [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk). Defra plans to publish the action plan in early 2008**



Could access for wheelchair users be improved?

## Access to Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum in London provides wheelchair and blue badge visitor parking on request, as well as wheelchair and lift access. It also offers:

- guide dog areas and attendants who can look after a dog
- free admission (to temporary exhibitions that charge) for a disabled visitor's helper; a disabled visitor is entitled to a concessionary ticket
- staff with signing and communication skills
- portable induction loops at information desks; neck loops or headphones are available for visitors with partial hearing
- large-print maps of the museum
- facilities for textphone calls via Tynetalk, user prefix 18001 020 942 5000.

"We are committed to engaging with diverse audiences who reflect the demographics of the world around us and increasing access to our galleries and collections," says museum manager Ian Jenkinson.

"Recognising the importance of our disabled visitors ensures that we maximise the visitor experience for everyone and helps to guarantee the future success of the museum."

## Making reasonable adjustments

Award winners: BT, Derbyshire Constabulary, Royal Bank of Scotland



Left to right: Becky Mason (BT); Darren Ali (Royal Bank of Scotland)

# A night for winners

Participants in the Employers' Forum on Disability 2007 Disability Standard were honoured at an awards ceremony at HM Treasury, London, in November. The diamond awards, which recognise gems of best practice, were a new feature of the standard.

The night's big winner was Royal Bank of Scotland, which scooped three awards for producing accessible information, making reasonable adjustments and listening to disabled people. Other multiple winners included the British Library, Lloyds TSB and BT.

More than 100 organisations, employing around 2 million people in the United Kingdom, entered the awards. EFD's projects

team sifted through around 4,000 pieces of evidence submitted by the organisations before deciding on up to four winners for each of the six award categories.

"We are extremely pleased to honour these organisations that have shown excellence at disability best practice," said EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker. "Getting it right on disability isn't always easy, but all organisations that took part in the Disability Standard 2007 have shown commitment to doing so.

"The evidence shows that taking part in the Disability Standard drives performance and has positive business benefits."

**Report by Michael Denham**

## Accessible goods and services

Award winners: BT, Barclays, British Library



Left to right: Diane Brown, Mark Walton (British Library); Becky Mason (BT); Susan Scott-Parker; Mark Palmer-Edgecumbe (Barclays)

## Accessible information

Award winners: Department for Work and Pensions, Lloyds TSB, Royal Bank of Scotland



Left to right: Darren Ali (Royal Bank of Scotland); Graeme Whippy and Tim Taylor (Lloyds TSB)

# Who said what on the night

“This event is putting across the right message very clearly and very visually. It is what we in businesses and organisations should be doing – considering our disabled colleagues and consumers”

**Steve Wherry**

Sainsbury's pensions project manager

“We've been on a long journey to get things right, but by no means are we at the end”

**Belinda Carley** Motability HR business partner

“Having accessible services and products aren't an add-on for Barclays – they're a core part of what we are trying to achieve. We want all our customers to be able to access what they need”

**Mark Palmer-Edgecumbe**

Barclays head of diversity

“Equality and fairness in Leicestershire is more than a tick box exercise; it is about a genuine commitment and making a real difference for those with a disability”

**David Lindley** Leicestershire Constabulary deputy chief constable

“It is the first time we have been involved in the Disability Standard and so this is just the beginning for us. The benchmark is the best management tool to have for giving a clear picture of where we are and what to do in terms of disability confidence and best practice. We now know how we measure up and what we can still do to deliver further improvements”

**Diane Brown**

British Library HR diversity business partner

“There are good business, legal and ethical reasons for getting disability equality right. This is a key business for West Midlands Police, contributing to our vision of reducing crime and disorder and making our communities feel safer”

**Emily Smith**

West Midlands Police diversity manager

## Listening to disabled people

Award winners: British Library, Royal Bank of Scotland, West Midlands Police



Left to right: Darren Ali (Royal Bank of Scotland); Diane Brown and Mark Walton (British Library); Emily Smith (West Midlands Police)

## Vision and commitment on disability

Award winners: B&Q, Essex Police, Lloyds TSB, Motability Operations



Left to right: Belinda Carley (Motability); Tim Taylor and Graeme Whippy (Lloyds TSB); Susan Scott-Parker; Richard Boyd (Disability Essex)

## Recruiting disabled people

Award winners: InterContinental Hotels, Leicestershire Constabulary, Welsh Assembly Government, Sainsbury's



Left to right: Steven Morris, Sylvia Howe (Welsh Assembly); Lasha Smaditch, Lynne Woodward (Leicestershire Constabulary); Susan Scott-Parker; Christopher Rawstron (InterContinental Hotels); Steve Wherry (Sainsbury's)

## Worldwide links

# EFD's associates develop an international dimension

Building on the strength and success of its UK associates, Employers' Forum on Disability launched a worldwide associates network on the International Day for Disabled Persons on 3 December last year. The worldwide associates are a virtual network of leading international disabled people.

Increasingly, EFD is called on to advise employers and policy-makers around the world. There is growing interest in our work and in the EFD business model, particularly in the United States, South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The worldwide associates will meet EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker twice a year via a conference call to update EFD and each other on what is happening in their part of the world.

The practical information from this exchange of experiences will help EFD to anticipate the needs of its members in a rapidly changing world.

The group consists of eight disabled people who are all experts in their field. "We are extremely pleased that the worldwide associates have joined our UK-based associates as honorary members of EFD. We look forward to working with them and gaining mutual support and advice on how to

spread disability confidence across the globe," says Scott-Parker.

As honorary EFD members, the worldwide associates will have

access to all EFD's best practice guidance tools and will be well placed to share UK knowledge with their home countries.

**Contact Victoria Darragh if you would like to get in touch with the worldwide associates: [victoria.darragh@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:victoria.darragh@employers-forum.co.uk)**

### Yves Veulliet (Belgium)



Yves Veulliet has been a wheelchair user since a motorbike accident in 1987. He had been studying to become a teacher but changed direction and started his professional life as a computer administrator in Brussels. A decade later Veulliet moved to IBM and then in 2005 he joined IBM's Europe, Middle East and Africa diversity team as programme manager for people with disabilities.

### Caroline Casey (Republic of Ireland)



Caroline Casey is the founding chief executive of the Aisling Foundation and O2 Ability Awards and has built a reputation in Ireland and abroad as an entrepreneur, adventurer and radio and television presenter. She was one of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation's (Radar) UK people of the year in 2002. A former management consultant, Casey is visually impaired.

## John Kemp (USA)



John Kemp is executive director and general counsel of the US Business Leadership Network, a national business-led disability organisation.

With more than 30 years of experience in the disability movement, Kemp has

served on the boards of some of the leading disability organisations in his country.

## Sylvana Lakkis (Lebanon)



Sylvana Lakkis is the president of the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union, a non-sectarian body that represents and involves people from different religious groups with various forms of physical disability.

## Paul Miller (USA)



Professor Paul Miller has been director, Disability Studies Program, and the Henry M. Jackson Professor of Law at the University of Washington since 2004. He is also a board member of Mental Disability Rights International.

## Graeme Innes (Australia)

Graeme Innes is a commissioner responsible for disability discrimination at the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in Australia.



Active in the disability field for more than 30 years, Innes was the first blind person to be president of the Royal Blind Society of New South Wales.

## Guy Davies (South Africa)



Guy Davies moved to South Africa from the UK in 1995 and set up an export company, 19°East. He became a wheelchair user in 1999, returned to the UK to study and set up as an access consultant. In 2003 Davies formed Disability Solutions, a not-for-profit company

in South Africa dedicated to the natural integration of disability into society.

## Stephen Gianni (Australia)

Stephen Gianni is director of Leadership Plus, Australia's major leadership and disability organisation. Previously he was the director of social action and research at the Brotherhood of St Laurence. He has also founded and managed businesses overseas.



# The view from the president's chair

Matthew Bell talks to John Varley, Barclays group chief executive and president of Employers' Forum on Disability

## What is the business rationale for taking disability issues seriously?

As business people we should be thinking about how to optimise our commercial prospects. In the United Kingdom around 18 per cent of the population has a disability and an even bigger percentage has somebody with a disability as part of their family. The chance to serve customers with disabilities represents a big commercial opportunity.

Turning to employees, if we are going to be expert at what we do, we have to have the best people and the best people are to be found in the most diverse pools.

## What has Barclays done for its employees and customers with disabilities over the past year?

Since I've been chief executive I've formed a disability listening group. Its purpose is to enable me to learn from colleagues who have disabilities what they want me to do that will have a real impact at Barclays. It's been very

“It's easy to say the government should do more. At the moment I feel the obligation is with us in business to state how we can get more people with disabilities into work”

helpful and a number of practical measures have come out of the group.

We now have an internship programme for students that tries to make it easier for people with disabilities to join us. We have also made it clear to local agencies that when Barclays is recruiting we want to recruit people with disabilities. As a result, for example, we've been able to bring more people with disabilities into call centres. We have also set up a mentoring network so that anybody within Barclays who has a disability can, if they wish, have a mentor.

## How successful has the President's Group, Employers' Forum on Disability's senior leadership body, been in its first year?

The President's Group is designed to put the significance of disability on to the agendas of business leaders across the UK. [EFD chief executive] Susan Scott-Parker and I are delighted that so many people have signed up to the group. The employment firepower around the President's Group's table is immense, but generally employers have not done well enough in terms of benchmarking themselves against best practice in the area of disability. We've made a good start, but it's only a start.

## How important is the United Nations' International Day of Disabled Persons theme of 'Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities'?

We should use any means possible to make clear the obligation on us as citizens and employers to help people with disabilities — whether they work in organisations such as Barclays or as our customers.

Having a day that is dedicated to disability will have a meaningful impact on the visibility of what we do as businesses, so it's greatly to be applauded. The theme, as part of a campaign of

awareness with worldwide recognition, is very important.

### **Do employers have a role to play in welfare reform?**

We can play a big role. The welfare to work agenda is rightly a significant pillar of the government's health and employment policies. It's still to be tested, but I very much hope that when EFD speaks the government listens, because we represent a very large body of employment within the UK. We've started that dialogue, and I think it is one that is rich in potential.

### **Should the government be taking a greater role?**

It's easy for me to say the government should do more. We are in the throes of specifying how we as employers can help. When we have done that we will, of course, look to the government to respond. That's the right sequence. At the moment I feel the obligation is with us in business to state how we can get more people with disabilities into work.

### **What are the main obstacles to employers recruiting and retaining people with disabilities?**

If I look at the evidence from employers around the country that are serious about employing people with disabilities, I can see that progress is being made. Have we achieved the level of success that we should? No, but there are no obstacles that are insuperable. Most of the obstacles to employers are in the mind.

### **Do you think disability issues can get lost within organisations' more general diversity policies?**

It's a very good question. Since I've been chief executive, we've been slower to make progress in the disability arena than elsewhere. What that tells me is that, although it's absolutely right to have disability as part of that equality and diversity agenda, you need specialist knowledge, techniques and resources to advance each of those agenda items.

That's one of the reasons my disability listening group has been so helpful, because it has enabled me to focus on a small number of things that really matter. It's so easy for us to

be platitudinous about equality and diversity, to talk a lot and get nowhere at all. To advance that agenda you have to specialise.

### **There's no going back, is there?**

No. It's a long and sometimes hard journey, but we have started to make progress on disability, not least because of the help and expertise we get from EFD.



in the  
**courts**



Bela Gor

## A recent case brings together the legal and best practice approach to making reasonable adjustments in the workplace

Employers' Forum on Disability advises employers and service providers to take a best practice approach and concentrate on removing barriers, rather than trying to work out whether an employee or customer is sufficiently disabled to merit a reasonable adjustment. Therefore, this column does not normally report cases on the definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

But the decision in *Paterson v Commissioner of the Metropolis (MPS)*, which considered whether a person's dyslexia was sufficiently severe to fit the definition of disability, has significant implications for employers and employees alike. The case is well worth reporting.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal's (EAT) rather surprising decision was that, because Mr Paterson needed the reasonable adjustment of 25 per cent extra time to take a promotion exam, it inevitably followed that there was a substantial adverse effect on his normal day-to-day activities. As a result, he was judged a disabled person under the DDA.

Mr Paterson became a police officer in 1983 and had reached the rank of chief inspector by 1999. Throughout his career he had been praised for writing clear reports and for being an able communicator.

**“ If someone is finding it difficult to undertake an activity at work because of an impairment, assume that this impairment is a disability ”**

In 2004 he discovered that he was dyslexic. His employer accepted that he had dyslexia and made some adjustments for him. Mr Paterson's claim of disability discrimination arose out of his application for promotion to superintendent.

### Expert reports

The employment tribunal heard conflicting expert reports. The MPS's expert, Dr Biddolph, said that Mr Paterson was accurate but slow in assimilating written information and concluded that he had "mild dyslexia". He recommended that Mr Paterson be allowed 25 per cent extra time at each stage of the selection process.

Mr Paterson's expert, Professor McLoughlin, also identified weaknesses in silent reading and comprehension but concluded that his dyslexia was more severe. Professor McLoughlin noted that "even slight problems with memory and literacy can, however, have a greater impact when someone is working at an advanced level.

"Many of my adult clients have worked successfully in complex occupations, but their difficulties become more evident when demands increase. This does not mean they have suddenly become dyslexic."

### At a disadvantage

The tribunal did not disagree with Professor McLoughlin's analysis but veered more towards the evidence of Dr Biddolph. It concluded there was no doubt that Mr Paterson would be at a disadvantage in his high-pressure job and in taking high-level examinations, but that the effect of his dyslexia was minor for normal day-to-day activities.

The tribunal therefore concluded that he was not disabled. However, it recommended that

MPS take into account Mr Paterson's dyslexia in terms of good industrial practice.

Mr Paterson appealed to the EAT, arguing that the purpose of the DDA was to prevent discrimination in all aspects of employment including opportunities for promotion. An employer should not, he argued, be able to avoid making adjustments for disabled employees on the ground that assessments for promotion are not normal day-to-day activities.

People with disabilities should have a legal right to reasonable adjustments so they could demonstrate their ability and suitability for promotion. This was more than simply a "good industrial practice" matter, said the employment tribunal.

The EAT agreed and said that whether a person's dyslexia is described as "mild", "moderate" or "severe" is irrelevant: what is important is the effect that the dyslexia has on normal day-to-day activities. It therefore accepted that taking high-pressure examinations was a normal day-to-day activity.

### European Court's decision

In support of this conclusion it cited the decision by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in the case of *Chacon Navas v Eurest Colectividades*.

In this case the ECJ held that the concept of disability should be given a uniform and autonomous meaning throughout the European Union as "a limitation which results in particular from physical, mental or psychological impairments and which hinders the participation of the person concerned in professional life". It added that this participation must be hindered over a long period of time.

The DDA must be interpreted in line with EU law, but the EAT said that it would have

reached the conclusion that taking exams was a normal day-to-day activity on domestic law without reference to *Chacon Navas v Eurest Colectividades*. The way to do this, it said, is to see "day-to day-activities" as encompassing activities that are relevant to participating in professional life. Therefore, appropriate measures must be taken to enable a worker to advance his or her employment.

Furthermore, added the EAT, when assessing whether a person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in carrying out a normal day-to-day-activity, he or she must be assessed not against other people who do not have that disability, but against how they would perform the activity if they did not have the disability.

### Key questions

The questions that an employer should ask are:

- is this person facing a substantial disadvantage in undertaking a particular activity because of the effect of an impairment such as dyslexia?
- is the activity a normal day-to-day activity given that this includes activities relevant to participation in professional life?

If the answer to both these questions is yes, the person is disabled for the purposes of the DDA. Employers should then consider what reasonable adjustment they could make to remove or reduce that disadvantage.

This case has brought together the legal and best practice approach to reasonable adjustments in the workplace. If someone is finding it difficult to undertake an activity at work because of an impairment, assume that this impairment is a disability and make reasonable adjustments to remove the barrier they face.

### Bela Gor is EFD's head of legal policy and information

## open to questions

A selection of recent queries that the Disability Directions team has helped members to address

**Q** We have a deaf candidate coming to our assessment centre in a few days' time. She is expected to complete a group exercise and panel interview. Should we ask her if she needs any support on the day?

**A** Yes, you need to find out if the candidate has any particular requirements for the day. But it is sensible to ask all candidates in advance of the interview and group exercise if they need any adjustments to ensure that there is enough time to organise anything required.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) places a legal duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments. This applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment and selection. If an adjustment is needed for the interview and group exercise and you have not allowed enough time to put it in place, you should move the candidate's interview to an appropriate date in the near future.

As you have such a short timescale, you need to get in touch with the candidate as quickly as possible to explain in detail what will be expected of her on the day. Ask the candidate if she thinks she will have difficulty with any part

## Disability Directions ...

... is the free confidential advice service for Employers' Forum on Disability members who need to know about disability as it affects their business. Advice is available on a range of topics – from



The team can offer tailored responses to queries

which impairments are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act to more complex questions about company policies and procedures. All calls are confidential and there is no cost to members, other than the price of a phone call.

We offer:

- tailored responses – no call is scripted
- two hours' free work on individual projects with no limit on the number of these extended queries
- access to the Connect service for disabled colleagues experiencing difficulties with member organisations
- signposting to EFD publications, events and other disability resources
- advice desks at selected EFD events.

**To contact Disability Directions, call 020 7403 3020 (minicom 020 7403 0040), fax 020 7403 0404 or email [disabilitydirections@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:disabilitydirections@employers-forum.co.uk). The service is open weekdays 9am-5pm**

of the process and, if so, how any barriers may be overcome.

Not everyone with a similar impairment will need the same adjustments. A deaf candidate may need a British sign language interpreter, a hearing loop or written information. She may also need extra time for explanation or to get used to lip patterns if she lip-reads. Of course, a candidate may not require any adjustments.

You will also need to discuss whether the candidate wishes to disclose her disability to the interview panel and to the other candidates. You can explain the benefits — for example, increased understanding among the group — but you cannot force her to take this course of action. If she does not wish to disclose her disability, you should only share what adjustments are required with the interview panel and set ground rules for the group exercise; for example, allowing only one candidate to speak at a time.

Finally, you should ensure that the candidate is provided with clear directions and a map detailing where the interview and group exercise are to be held. You could arrange for someone to meet her in reception and ensure that your reception staff and interview panel have received disability awareness training.

**Q** A trainee manager at one of our stores is blind and works with the aid of an assistance dog. We recently received a complaint from a customer about the dog's presence in a store that sells food. Is there a risk to health and safety, and how should we respond to the complaint?

**A** Under the DDA, an employer must make reasonable adjustments where any physical feature of the premises, or any provision, criteria or practice made by or on behalf of the employer causes a substantial disadvantage to a disabled employee. Without the use of an assistance dog your member of staff could be at substantial disadvantage and may be unable to perform her role.

Assistance dogs are highly trained working animals that are trained to sit or lie with their owner and only go to the toilet on command.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) guidance 'Know your rights: assistance dog owners' cites the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health advice that well-trained assistance dogs do not pose a risk to health and safety. The institute has issued this information on cards that many assistance dog owners carry with them.

Although many businesses have policies banning animals from their premises because of health and safety concerns, it is usually reasonable to make exceptions for assistance dogs. There is no reason why this should not apply to dogs owned both by employees and customers.

It is, however, important to address your customer's complaint properly. You could devise a standard answer explaining why the dog is not a health and safety risk in line with Health and Safety Executive and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance. A senior member of staff should have responsibility for dealing with complaints, and you should ensure that your staff are aware of the identity of the person responsible.

Disability awareness training for staff, including work on visual impairment, will smooth the process of working and meeting people with specific impairments. It will also help employees to recognise and avoid exhibiting attitudes and behaviour that create barriers or lead to misunderstandings.

You should also consider offering training to colleagues on how to work with an assistance dog: it is a working animal and should not be treated as a pet. With the employee's consent you could invite the dog's trainer to run awareness training for the team.

**For more information, see EFD's briefing papers: 'Employment adjustments for people who are deaf or hard of hearing' and 'Employment adjustments for people with sight problems'; both are available from the publications team on 020 7403 3020**

**The DRC has been replaced by the EHRC. 'Know your rights: assistance dog owners' can now be downloaded from: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)**

## EFD publications and events

# Publications that help employers to get it right

EFD's publications team has been providing practical guidance on disability since the disability etiquette guide was launched in 1991. Today more than 4.5 million copies of EFD publications are being used around the world to help business to get it right on disability.

Kristina Sinclair and her new publications team — account managers Leander Feltham and Keith Harris, who joined last August — can help employers find solutions to employing disabled people and serving disabled customers.

The team can advise on how to use EFD publications, as well as on tailoring guides to an organisation's specific needs and licensing them for intranet use. It can also advise on using EFD guides and publications to help shape and complement disability awareness and management development training.

“The team is here to make it easier for businesses to get it right on disability. Not only can we advise on the best publications for your organisation, we also advise on how to move your disability agenda forward,” says Sinclair.



The EFD's publications team: Kristina Sinclair, Leander Feltham and Keith Harris

## More EFD briefings

The next series of briefing papers will focus on getting it right on reasonable adjustments in the workplace, recruitment policies and specific impairments such as dyslexia. “This guidance is practical and extensive and enables organisations to gain a fuller understanding of how to create a level playing field for all employees and, in turn, increase the motivation of employees and productivity of the business,” says Sinclair.

## Coming soon

### ‘Attendance management and disability’

The next publication in EFD's popular line manager guide series will be published in February. “Attendance management is a complex issue,” says Sinclair. “This practical framework will make it easier for managers to spot the potential early signs of absence related to disability, avoid long-term sickness absence and manage an effective back-to-work plan for a team member.”



EFD is producing more publications in partnership with other organisations as employers are increasingly seeing the benefits of engaging with both disabled and non-disabled staff. The most popular ‘co-branded’ publications include the ‘Disability communication guide’, ‘Welcoming disabled customers’ and the line manager guide, ‘A best practice approach to disabled colleagues’.

# Staff networks can be more than a sounding board

At the end of November, Employers' Forum on Disability ran an Afterhours event on disabled staff networks. Members met at the Museum of Garden History in Lambeth to share their ideas and experiences.

The evening's guest speaker was EFD associate Kate Nash. She explained that staff networks generally follow one of three models: an instrument for change, a consultation forum or a support network. Each can work well, she said, but the secret of their success is to set a clear purpose and work to it.

EFD chief executive and chair for the evening, Susan Scott-Parker, asked the audience what they hoped to achieve from a disabled staff network. Most said that networks should act as a sounding board for disabled and non-disabled employees alike, as well as facilitating consultation between management and staff. Delegates also thought networks should look after the everyday employment interests of disabled staff and add value to their organisation. Some also hoped networks could be used as a springboard for social events.

Members already running networks offered advice. Targeting key people, such as facilities and IT managers, to attend meetings regularly and including the network into an organisation's induction process were two of their tips. Some organisations reported problems with security staff, who had not been welcoming disabled visitors to the premises until their network got to work.

But networks were not without problems. Delegates mentioned a lack of engagement by managers and recognition for the work put into



A signer helps Susan Scott-Parker, centre, get the message across at the Afterhours event

the network, and a loss of momentum when key organisers left the organisation.

Paul Zickel, chair of the Civil Service disability network, welcomed the "rich diversity" of organisations represented at the event. "The interesting thing is that all the problems with disability best practice are universal," he said.

"All these organisations are fundamentally dealing with the same thing, and that is what I find so energising about it. People have been speaking passionately. The will is there."

## Report by Nick Bason and Issy Rule

### A successful network ...

enables disabled and non-disabled staff to share ideas and experiences freely

will be taken seriously throughout the organisation if it has board-level support

should have a clear focus on employment issues and specific aims

should run drop-in sessions to offer advice and allow employees to raise issues

should allow staff to have their say and address negative experiences

should have input into wider staff survey issues in the organisation

**'Disabled employee networks best practice guide: ultimate people networks' from Kate Nash Associates will be published in February. For more information, email [kate@katenashassociates.com](mailto:kate@katenashassociates.com) or call 07904 018939**

## Gold group

# SOCA serious about disability confidence

Serious Organised Crime Agency diversity team leader Mary Callaghan tells Issy Rule about the benefits of EFD gold membership

One of the purposes of EFD gold membership is to allow members to network, share ideas on disability – and put them into practice. After attending a ‘Dining with a difference’ event last year, Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) board members Trevor Pearce and Bill Hughes were inspired to look at work placements. The result was that EFD gained a police and law enforcement network co-ordinator, Richard Dixon, on secondment from SOCA.

The agency was formed from the amalgamation of the National Crime Squad, National Criminal Intelligence Service, the part of HM Revenue and Customs dealing with drug trafficking and the part of UK Immigration dealing with organised immigration crime. It has been an EFD gold member since 2006.

“The opportunities for our most senior and committed executive colleagues to attend the President’s group and other gold events has brought us the benefits of networking and sharing good practice ideas,” says diversity team leader Mary Callaghan.



SOCA’s remit includes combatting gun crime

One member of Callaghan’s team is devoted to disability and there are 130 diversity representatives throughout the organisation. SOCA also runs a disability staff group, which is open to anyone with an interest in the subject.

Callaghan sat on a panel that arranged the secondment of Dixon, who will be working with EFD’s police members for the next six to 12 months. One other result of the ‘Dining with a difference’ event is that Callaghan is now responsible for organising SOCA’s own programme of work placements for people with disabilities.

Gold membership is a vital part of SOCA’s diversity policy, argues Callaghan. “We are very serious about becoming disability confident. By declaring our status it also puts the spotlight on us – we have to keep the issue of disability high on the agenda and deliver,” she says.

“Disability is an important part of our diversity policy. It’s not just because there is anti-discrimination legislation; we also have a social justice and moral reason to include it.

“It is also recognition of the scale and impact of disability. Most people will become disabled while they are working, so we need to be able to raise awareness about how we can keep people in gainful work, respecting their dignity.”

Callaghan says that gold membership has given SOCA full access to the expertise and resources EFD offers. She highlights the support of the police and law enforcement network, a dedicated co-ordinator from EFD and the opportunity to attend workshops, master classes and telephone tutorials as particularly useful.

She hopes that SOCA’s gold membership will give credibility to her team’s work on disability. “People are afraid of disability,” says Callaghan. “It is a great generalisation, but in my experience people don’t know how or whether to talk about it, or how to manage situations when someone becomes disabled or when someone with a disability joins their team. It is important to have the support and help to relieve those fears.”

# Awareness events

Many charities run an annual awareness day, week or month, and most can supply leaflets, posters and even speakers.

**4 January** World Braille Day,  
[www.worldblindunion.org](http://www.worldblindunion.org)

**5 January** Hypoparathyroidism Awareness Day,  
[www.hypoparathyroidism.org.uk](http://www.hypoparathyroidism.org.uk)

**21-27 January** World Leprosy Week,  
[www.lepra.org.uk](http://www.lepra.org.uk)

**1-28 February** Raynaud's Awareness Month,  
[www.raynauds.org.uk](http://www.raynauds.org.uk)

**11-17 February** National Tinnitus Week,  
[www.tinnitus.org.uk](http://www.tinnitus.org.uk). Helpline 0800 018 0527

**25 February-1 March** Eating Disorders Awareness Week, [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk). Helpline: 0845 634 1414

**1-31 March** The Great Daffodil Appeal,  
[www.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk). Helpline: 0845 601 3107

**1-31 March** Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month,  
[www.ovarian.org.uk](http://www.ovarian.org.uk)

**9-16 March** Share the Care Week,  
[www.sharedcarenetwork.org.uk](http://www.sharedcarenetwork.org.uk)

**10-16 March** Prostate Cancer Awareness Week, [www.prostate-cancer.org.uk](http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0800 074 8383

**13 March** World Kidney Day,  
[www.worldkidneyday.org.uk](http://www.worldkidneyday.org.uk)

**15-22 March** Conductive Education Awareness Week, [www.conductive-education.org.uk](http://www.conductive-education.org.uk)

**24 March** World TB Day, [www.tbalert.org](http://www.tbalert.org)

**31 March-6 April** Brain Injury Awareness Week,  
[www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk). Helpline: 0808 800 2244

**Contact the event organiser for the latest information**

## EFD gold group

- Abbey
- Accenture
- ARAMARK
- B&Q
- Barclays
- BBC
- BP
- BSkyB
- BT
- BUPA
- Camelot Group
- Centrica
- Cisco Systems
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Ernst & Young
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Goldman Sachs International
- HBOS
- HM Revenue & Customs
- InterContinental Hotels Group
- Interserve
- ITV
- JGP
- Jobcentre Plus
- KPMG
- Land Securities Group
- Learning and Skills Council
- Lehman Brothers
- Lloyds TSB Bank
- London Development Agency
- McDonald's Restaurants
- Merrill Lynch
- Ministry of Defence
- Motability Operations
- National Offender Management Service
- Netcare Healthcare UK
- NHS Employers
- NHS Scotland
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Rockpools
- Royal Bank of Scotland Group
- Royal Mail Group
- Sainsbury's Supermarkets
- Serious Organised Crime Agency
- Tesco Stores
- Transport for London
- UBS
- Unum

The gold group's commitment underpins EFD's work. As core funders their support is fundamental in building our capacity to make it easier to employ disabled people, serve disabled customers and value disabled people as stakeholders. This core group enables EFD, its members and indeed society at large to actively promote the economic and social inclusion of disabled people. EFD has over 400 private and public sector members, representing 20 per cent of the UK workforce. A full list of members can be found at [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk)

**Contact: Ian Hastie, head of business development. Email [ian.hastie@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:ian.hastie@employers-forum.co.uk)**

# EFD events calendar February-May 2008

**5 February** Workshop: disability equality training, 10am-4pm, London. £255\*/£385.

**11 February** Workshop: valued in public action learning, 9.30am-4.30pm, London. Free.

**13 February** Roundtable: introduction to disability, 8.30-10.30am, London. Free.

**14 February** Hot topic: serving customers with learning disabilities, 10am-1pm, London. £160\*/£240.

**27 February** Telephone tutorial: promoting change, 3.30-4.30pm. £90\*/£135.

**28 February** Roundtable special: employees who care for disabled adults and children, 9-11am, London. Free.

**3 March** Gold Group evening reception, 6.30-8.30pm, London. Free.

**6 March** DDA masterclass: goods, facilities and services, 10am-4pm, London. £285\*/£395.

**6 March** Afterhours event: disability and diversity, 6-8pm, London. Free.

**12 March** Roundtable: update on disability, 10am-12 noon, London. Free.

**19 March** Conference: supporting line managers on disability, 10am-4pm, London. £255\*/£385.

**25 March** Telephone tutorial: how to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace, 3.30-4.30pm. £90\*/£135.

**27 March** Disability awareness mega quiz, 6-8.30pm, Newcastle. Free.

**16 April** Roundtable: introduction to disability, 10am-12 noon, London. Free.

**\*Price for members and charities, exclusive of VAT. All events include refreshments. For full details or to book a place, visit [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk) or call 020 7403 3020**

**24 April** Hot topic: welcoming disabled delegates, 10am-1pm, Manchester. £160\*/£240.

**30 April** DDA masterclass: employment, 10am-4pm, London. £285\*/£395.

**14 May** Roundtable: update on disability, 8.30-10.30am, London. Free.

**15 May** Workshop: creating accessible websites, 10am-4pm, London. £255\*/£385.

**22 May** DDA masterclass: employment, 10am-4pm, Liverpool. £285\*/£395.

## Newcastle to host mega quiz

Following the success of last July's Wakefield mega quiz, EFD is working with the Percy Hedley Foundation to put on another 'quiz with a difference'. Newcastle United Football Club is the venue for the event, which is sponsored by the Learning and Skills Council.



The quiz will help contestants to understand the facts of disability, not the myths; learn how to employ people with disabilities; and network in a relaxed environment.

The comperes will be Phil Friend of Minty & Friend and David Barker from the Percy Hedley Foundation. No knowledge of disability is necessary – just lots of enthusiasm and a desire to improve your knowledge. All EFD members are welcome to attend. The event is free, but spaces are limited to five per organisation.

The quiz will be held on 27 March from 6-8.30pm.

**For more details, call the events team on 020 7403 3020, minicom 020 7403 0040, email [events@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:events@employers-forum.co.uk) or visit our website [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk)**



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Website: [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk)

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