

# Celebrating National Inclusion Week

Today I've headed down to London, to the House of Lords in fact, to join other leaders from inclusive employers to help kick-start National Inclusion Week.

National Inclusion Week is an annual week of workplace activities and events that highlight the importance of inclusion across the UK. Here at BPDTS we've video chats, quizzes, blogs and much more planned – and will be focussing on topics such as data inclusivity, inclusivity in meetings and unconscious bias. We're also looking forward to joining other inclusive employers on webinars during the week

The theme for National Inclusion Week this year is #everydayinclusion – which chimes with me both personally and professionally.

## **Being respected and valued for who we are**

I'm sure I can't be alone in admitting there are times during my life where I feel others haven't been overly welcoming or inclusive towards me. I don't mind sharing that on some of these occasions this has really upset me, made me feel angry, knocked my self-esteem and in my mind prevented me from doing as well as I could.

Equally there are other instances where someone going out of their way to support and include me in what's going on has made a huge positive difference to my life.

If you know me well, you'll also know that music is one of my passions. But until recent years I've never been able to read music or play an instrument. When I moved house seven years ago I decided that was going to change.

I tried out at the local male voice choir but wasn't made at all welcome – no one bothered to talk with me and I got the sense people were making fun of me. I kept at it for around 2 months, but things weren't getting any better so I spoke with the Musical Conductor. He believed it was because of two things; being a lot younger than the others and being what they call in this part of Yorkshire, a 'comerinerer'. Needless to say I was upset and angry and eventually stopped going.

I then joined the local brass band, and what a completely different story. Everyone went out of their way to welcome me, to help me to learn how to play and supported me 100%. I felt fabulous and it encouraged me to put extra effort into practice each week to get better.

This probably explains why, 5 years later, I now play in the senior band and still put extra practice in whenever I can. And all because I was made to feel valued.

## **Becoming naturally inclusive at BPDTS**

With 'Inclusivity' being one of our company's values we're doing all we can to create a happy, safe and healthy work environment for all of our people – where we trust, value and respect each other and celebrate our diversity.

We want to support our people to feel they can be authentic and true to themselves – because we believe it will help them to unlock their full potential and be the best they can be in everything they do.

Listening to and valuing the perspectives of people from different backgrounds is helping us create a rich tapestry of creativity where new innovative ideas and challenging the status quo constructively is becoming the new norm.

We're clear where we want to get to. Our ultimate goal is to become naturally inclusive, where respecting and celebrating one another's diversity simply runs deep through the veins of everything we do without thinking about it.

## **Take part in National Inclusion Week**

National Inclusion Week provides us all with a great opportunity to think about, learn and identify what we can do to be better human beings to one another.

Think about a moment when you suddenly felt included in something: when was this, what was it you felt included in, who made you feel included, what was it that made you feel included, and how did it feel when you were? Now go make that difference to someone.

And what then for the rest of the year? I'm reminded of a saying that goes along the lines of 'what we focus on will prosper, and what we don't will wither away'.

The call to action for leaders attending the launch event today was to reach out to others to help them understand the opportunity which inclusion brings. I hope I've gone some way towards doing this. If not, watch out for more blogs during the week on the things we've already or plan to do to be naturally inclusive here at BPDTS – #LifeatBPDTS.

Find out more about [National Inclusion Week](#) and join in activities happening where you work.