

Press release: Disability champions set to open industry doors

The champions will use their influential status as leaders in their industries to promote the benefits of being inclusive to disabled people across 6 new areas: fashion, technology, countryside and heritage, website accessibility, food and drink and product design.

Poor access can restrict many areas of disabled people's lives, from online shopping to enjoying the country's natural beauty.

The new champions will join the existing 14 champions who are already driving improvements to the accessibility of services and facilities in a range of sectors, including banking, music and tourism.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton said:

There are nearly 14 million disabled people living in the UK. By showing other businesses the importance of making disabled customers a priority, our new champions will ensure disabled people aren't missing out on experiences and services which many take for granted.

The existing champions have already made significant progress in breaking down the barriers faced by disabled consumers.

The music champion Suzanne Bull has launched a new industry taskforce aimed at improving the experience for deaf and disabled customers when booking tickets for live music events.

Johnny Timpson is the disability champion for the insurance industry and Industry Affairs Manager at Scottish Widows. He is bringing together representatives from the insurance industry, regulatory bodies and charities for the first time to look at how to make the industry more transparent and inclusive.

Insurance Champion Johnny Timpson said:

Walking the talk on diversity is essential for the insurance sector, and my champion role enables me to work with the industry to improve access to affordable insurance for disabled consumers.

Becoming a champion has allowed me to bring key players to the table to agree on a clear set of actions for making the insurance industry more inclusive.

The disability champions are just one of the ways the government is ensuring that disabled people can participate fully in society. A whole range of support is on offer to support those disabled people who want to work to find a job that is right for them.

Applications from disabled people are particularly welcome, but it is not essential to have a lived experience of disability.

The 14 existing disability champions are:

- advertising – Sam Phillips, CMO at Omnicom Media Group
- airports – Michael Connolly, Regional Training and Standards Manager at OCS Ltd
- arts and culture – Andrew Miller, National Council Member for the Arts Council England and the Arts Council of Wales
- banking – Trudie Hills, Disability Manager, Lloyds Bank
- buses – Jane Cole, Managing Director at Blackpool Transport Services
- gaming – Dr Jo Twist OBE, CEO of UKIE
- hotels – Robin Sheppard, Chairman of Bespoke Hotels
- insurance – Johnny Timpson, Financial Protection Technical & Industry Affairs Manager, Scottish Widows
- leisure – Huw Edwards, Public Affairs Director at UKActive
- media – Dan Brooke, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer at Channel 4
- music – Suzanne Bull MBE, CEO of Attitude is Everything
- rail – Stephen Brookes OBE, Member of Rail Delivery Group's governance group and Non-Executive Director of Blackpool Transport
- retail – Samantha Sen, Head of Policy and Campaigns at Revo (Interim)
- tourism – Chris Veitch, co-founder of Access New Business

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5123

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