



People Power

Disability Confident Case Studies

Stepping up: Supporting employers to become Disability Confident

Being Disability Confident is a badge of honour for any conscientious employer. It represents a commitment to inclusivity that is recognised and respected by disabled and non-disabled communities across the UK.

The Disability Confident employer scheme is an initiative from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

The scheme was developed by employers and representatives of people with disabilities to make it rigorous but easily accessible for businesses of any size. Ingeus, along with 20,000 other Disability Confident registered employers, hasn't looked back since joining the scheme. As one of the first companies to achieve the highest level of accreditation, Disability Confident Leader, we offer free mentoring to other employers on their journey to achieving Disability Confident accreditation, as well as independent assessment and verification.

We help accredit Disability Confident submissions through the three Disability Confident levels:

- **Level 1:** Disability Confident Committed
- **Level 2:** Disability Confident Employer
- **Level 3:** Disability Confident Leader

Here we showcase some of the many leading employers that are now Disability Confident.



Ingeus' Disability Confident lead, Grant, has verified more than 70 organisations to attain Disability Confident status.

"Disability Confident is all about making progressive steps and making meaningful changes to support people with disabilities in the workplace. The Disability Confident scheme encourages businesses to open more opportunities for people with disabilities and help sustain their employment."

Grant Neems, Stakeholder Engagement Director

Hillingdon Council's successful second innings



- ✓ Local authority
- ✓ Level 3 reaccreditation

Getting to the top of any field takes commitment and determination. Staying there in changeable times can be even more of a challenge.

For employers like Hillingdon Council, that have achieved the government-accredited Disability Confident Leader status, revalidating their commitment every three years is a stringent requirement.

Remaining in the top tier of Disability Confident employers is an ongoing priority for the Council, which first became a Disability Confident Leader in 2020. A major employer of 2,500 staff supporting residents in the West London borough, they aim for their workforce to be truly representative of the local community. Staff surveys indicate in the region of 11% of the council's workforce currently have a disability. Setting an example to other civic partners and continually improving its inclusivity policies is also massively important.

Vicky Trott, Hillingdon Council's Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager says: "It's been a natural progression for us to move to Leader status and we're determined to not only retain it, but to improve and expand our efforts. We want every council employee to feel respected, able to give their best, and be themselves at work."

Introduced to Ingeus' Disability Confident lead, Grant Neems, by the Department for Work and Pensions which governs the Disability Confident scheme, Vicky was happy to take his advice on board.

"Grant helped us focus on gathering the right evidence to support our reassessment. Further, he helped us assess specific measurements for improvements in the future. It's not just about a second accreditation, it's about the next positive steps to take."

Time mentoring and assessing other organisations to progress within the Disability Confident framework is given free of charge. It proved to be a highly positive collaboration for the Council. "The process was straightforward and easy. It was very collaborative," Vicky continues. "I didn't feel pressured, there was lots of flexibility to get the process right. Grant's advice also prompted action on some areas we'd been considering. We're now actively establishing a disabled staff network and rolling out a 'share not declare' scheme to encourage staff to share more diversity data with us so we can best cater to ongoing needs. Our Workforce Inclusion Partnership Manager has also been invited on industry forums with Grant. It's a very beneficial partnership."

Hillingdon Council successfully reached Disability Confident Leader status, for a second time, in August 2023. Vicky couldn't be more delighted: "Being a Disability Confident Leader helps us identify and share areas of best practice, to be creative and improve our approach to disability inclusion. It's so valuable for our existing workforce, who may acquire a disability during their working lives with us. From a recruitment perspective, people knowing they're joining an organisation with that level of accreditation also goes a long way."

Vicky Trott
Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager
Hillingdon Council



“Disability Confident is all about making progressive steps and making meaningful changes to support people with disabilities in the workplace. The Disability Confident scheme encourages businesses to open more opportunities for people with disabilities and help sustain their employment.”

MyPlus: Small – but perfectly formed



- ✓ Micro business
- ✓ Level 3

They say good things come in small packages and that couldn't be truer of MyPlus, a tiny yet mighty microbusiness and one of the UK's leading authorities in disability recruitment and development.

Founded in 2006 by CEO Helen Cooke, she utilised her lived experience of working life as a wheelchair user. The company invests revenue generated from work with employers via MyPlus Consulting and MyPlus Recruiters' Club into providing free resources and career advice for disabled students via MyPlus Student's Club.

MyPlus extols the extra skills, talents and mindset that come from managing a disability. It supports businesses to employ disabled people; it helps disabled students confidently navigate the jobs market; and it works with more than 80 universities to help their disabled students transition into employment. All this, with just three permanent staff members.

Given that as a business MyPlus is all about disability confidence, it was only natural to strive for the highest level of accreditation in the government's Disability Confident scheme. Yet given the strict requirement to evidence disability inclusion in all aspects of its business, how could such a small enterprise, with limited time and resources, achieve Disability Confident Leader status?

Ingeus supported MyPlus with its successful Disability Confident Leader bid back in 2020, and more recently with its successful triannual reaccreditation.

Lise Austen is responsible for MyPlus' employer focussed brands and services and identified the need to punch above their weight in gaining, and retaining, their Leader status.

"Not only was Level 3 validation the right thing for MyPlus to do given the basis of our business, it also enables us to demonstrate to employers we work with that we can help them become disability confident too and benefit from the skills and talents of disabled people.

"The verification process calls for evidence across all areas of the business and at times it was difficult to demonstrate recent examples – we're not actively recruiting for instance so couldn't show a live job advert. Grant was able to advise other ways of demonstrating our disability commitments to avoid gaps and prevented us being penalised as a small company. His suggestions were easy to take on board and I appreciated the time he volunteered to help make sure we retained our prized status.

"With our fresh Disability Confident Leader accolade, we want to expand support to the ever-growing number of disabled students and help more employers benefit from the unique talents and strengths that disabled people bring to an organisation. Our vision is to ensure that having a disability or long-term health condition doesn't prevent anyone from having the career they want to have."

Pension Protection Fund: The alliance of giants



- ✓ Large enterprise
- ✓ Level 3 reaccreditation

When the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) gained Disability Confident Leader status in October 2020 – a year earlier than anticipated – its determination was clear.

Striving to be an employer of choice for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions saw them take giant, inclusive strides forward, but as HR Business Partner Niki Blaho acknowledges, 'that doesn't mean we know all the answers'. With diversity and inclusion firmly at its core, Niki says:

"Our aim is to foster a culture where everyone can be themselves and feel respected and valued for their differences. From Board level down we're committed to ensuring new and sustainable careers for people who might otherwise struggle to find, or retain, employment.

"Every three years, we're required to submit evidence of our Disability Confident Leader status and the Department for Work and Pensions suggested Ingeus as an independent expert to provide a robust assessment of our application."

Much of the supporting evidence and solid content for the re-accreditation came from the PPF's internal Diverse Ability Action and Awareness Group, who meet regularly to have open conversations around neurodivergence, disabilities and long-term health conditions.

The evidence for the re-accreditation recognised the PPF's efforts in other areas such as reporting on disability and long-term health condition pay gap for the first time in

2023 and the practical adjustments made to their office to enable easier access.

Not only that, but it recognised their efforts in their commitments to recruitment – they advertise all external vacancies on the Scope job board and ensure managers are provided with reasonable adjustment guidelines ahead of an interview process. Overall, they have seen an increase of more than 50% in applicants who shared they had long-term health conditions or disabilities, with hiring managers participating in inclusive recruitment training before conducting recruitment activities.

Niki also acknowledged that Grant guided them to highlight their successes more prominently and gave suggestions of how to demonstrate commitments.

"We're planning to continue our work with Ingeus to open up even more discussions and opportunities – not just at the PPF, but across our supply chains and partner networks. There's so much still to do, to do the right thing and genuinely make a difference.

"Of most value though was the expertise and examples Grant was able to share from Ingeus working with other organisations. It felt like we weren't just tapping into one expert, but the experiences and solutions developed by countless other Disability Confident Leaders. Ingeus volunteered Grant's time to us to not only ensure a successful revalidation, but to think of what's next in the PPF becoming truly representative of the communities we serve."

NHS Resolution: A resolution to succeed



Resolution

- ✓ Public body
- ✓ Level 3 reaccreditation

NHS Resolution is an expert public body affiliated to the Department of Health and Social Care which supports the NHS to resolve concerns and disputes fairly and avoid unnecessary court action.

It was no surprise therefore that the good ship Resolution took a measured and determined approach to evidence its Disability Confident status, competently navigated by Organisational Development Advisor, Clive Avril. With almost 700 employees encompassing varied job roles including claims assessors, clinical advisors, case managers, data scientists, and back-office staff, at sites based in London and Leeds, would the verification prove to be plain sailing? Clive ensured it was.

"I began by developing a business case for mental health first aiders and Disability Confident was the logical next step," recalls Clive, whose own experience of having a phenomenally successful blind brother drives his passion for accessible employment.

"We joined the scheme in March 2020 at Level 1 Disability Confident Committed and quickly progressed to Level 2 Disability Confident Employer.

"Gaining senior leader buy-in was important, as was evidencing how we have gone beyond the norm in disability inclusion. I collated evidence and data centrally across a number of areas including our coaching and mentoring program, apprenticeship programme, disability awareness training, Mental Health First Aiders, and staff networks, and encouraged colleagues

to submit supporting evidence online. It became an interactive process across the business and during the verification Grant was clearly impressed with the approach we had taken. I am delighted to say we gained Level 3 Disability Confident Leader in July 2023."

Grant, Ingeus' lead supporting the process, concurred: "The structured approach and thorough evidencing NHS Resolution provided demonstrated a really solid foundation of policy and process to deliver disability inclusion. They were also very keen to promote their initiatives internally. What stood out to me was their drive to create a positive environment for their staff to thrive, while also being very aspirational about what is next. I was so impressed; I went to London to present their Leader accreditation in person!"

Clive adds: "As part of the wider NHS family, it's important that we espouse the values and cultures it represents. Grant has helped us demonstrate that in a tangible accreditation. He helped us evidence our milestones and was a friendly, enthusiastic advocate of what we were trying to achieve. We appreciated him presenting our certificate – which we encouraged all staff to attend, in person or online.

"We aim to be a role model and advocate for other employers and would like to support others to become Disability Confident."

“Gaining senior leader buy-in was important, as was evidencing how we have gone beyond the norm in disability inclusion.”

Clive Avril
Organisational Development Advisor
NHS Resolution



Enterprise Rent-A-Car: An enterprising move



- ✓ Large enterprise
- ✓ Level 3

As busy professionals, how often do we take the opportunity to take stock, appraise, and most importantly capitalise on all the good work going on around us? In the maelstrom of corporate life, as organisations strive to evolve and outsmart ever changing markets, it can be easy for the brilliance of day-to-day to get lost in the ether.

This was the situation faced by car rental and mobility provider Enterprise Rent-A-Car which, back in the summer of 2021, took a conscious step to consolidate and formalise its work on disability inclusion by pitching for Disability Confident Leader status.

Level 3 Leader status is the top tier of the government's Disability Confident scheme, which recognises employers for their commitments and active policies to employ disabled people.

With a 7,000-strong workforce and more than 450 branches across the UK, Enterprise Rent-A-Car had impressive credentials and ample evidence to support its bid. Prompted by Talent Acquisition Specialist, Marcus Ashley, it was time to seize the day and aim for accreditation.

"I knew of the Disability Confident scheme from my time with our Enterprise Flex-E-Rent brand where we achieved Level 2 Disability Confident Employer," explains Marcus. "We realised that as a centralised HR function there was so much good practice being shown across the business. We just needed to collate it and showcase it properly; to use it to better effect.

"With Grant's help, submitting to Level 3 encouraged us to self-analyse and plan

next steps," continues Marcus. "He helped us focus on the evidence and made sure we made the most of the fantastic work we were already doing within the business to attract and retain diverse talent.

"Enterprise Rent-A-Car is passionate about providing a workplace where everyone can thrive. We recognise that diverse talent drives more and better ideas. Our commitment to embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion is at the heart of our business – and this Disability Confident Leader status helps us to showcase it better."

The organisation duly gained Leader status in September 2021 and has since been featured in the Financial Times 'Diversity Leaders' ranking for Europe. Its journey will continue with Disability Confident revalidation in September 2024.

"We're regularly liaising with colleagues at the Department for Work and Pensions on where we can take this next – especially in promoting the qualities of being a Disability Confident Leader to students and young workers.

"Gaining Leader status has had a tangible impact for us. We've joined the Disability Confident Employer Roundtable for Haulage and Logistics and are active partners with Business Disability Forum. It's given us a seat at the table with other large employers to push for lasting change and improvements for disabled workers. It's absolutely worth taking the time and effort to become Disability Confident."

Marcus Ashley
Talent Acquisition Specialist
Enterprise Rent-a-car



“Enterprise Rent-A-Car is passionate about providing a workplace where everyone can thrive. We recognise that diverse talent drives more and better ideas. Our commitment to embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion is at the heart of our business – and this Disability Confident Leader status helps us to showcase it better.”

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Ingeus can guide and support you through all three stages of the Disability Confident journey. Our advice is free and can help you create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Contact us at info@ingeus.co.uk

ingeus

Read our story at ingeus.co.uk, and stay connected on social media – see you there!



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