

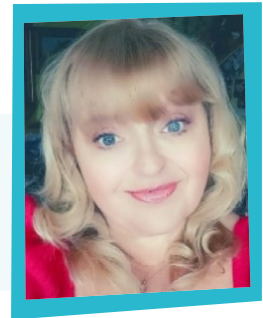


# Diversity Task Force

## Disability Inclusive Workplace Quick Guide for Employers

### PERSONAL STORY

**Sarah Hayward, Pastoral & Learning Coach,  
Sparshatt Van & Truck**



I'm Sarah Hayward, a Pastoral and Learning Coach for Sparshatt Truck and Van Academy in Kent. I am registered deaf, and a bi-lateral hearing aid wearer, but also suffer from stress, anxiety and other MH/confidence issues.

#### **Workplace adjustments**

I use national health hearing aids, in the workplace there is little that can be provided for me, I do not use the phone, but I do use my work phone to text, email and message. In meetings or presentations I am sat so that I can see the main deliverer or can see everyone.

#### **Goals & Wishes**

In an ideal world for me, support for my hearing disability would mean access to accurate voice to text phones.

For all people with non-visible communication disabilities, it would be not having to feel like lesser people, or having to work twice as hard for understanding (or even having to pay for their own adjustments, as I have in the past).

People being aware that having a non-visible disability is just as exhausting as visible ones. The constant need to have to explain myself to people that I am deaf, or can't understand what you are saying, the mental strain of trying to interpret what you are saying. Something that others do normally takes longer for us to work out, in my case it is called auditory exhaustion. It's not that we're being rude, which sometimes this is mistaken for.

Making applications to Access to Work, to help with getting assistance with adaptive aids to assist people, could make life a lot easier; In my case, not having to make a phone call!

#### **Frustrations**

What doesn't work for me and makes life almost impossible are webinars without captions and many people talking over one another. I just get a headache and can't follow what is going on. I'm sure that most people struggle in meetings when everyone is talking at once, especially the transcriber!

Very loud environments are a nightmare for a deaf/hearing impaired person. Just an overwhelming tsunami of sound if it's a very loud, noisy work environment.

A lack of understand that in the majority of cases a disability is for life. It doesn't get better, it can only progress and even get worse in some cases. In the past I have had someone actually say to me "is your hearing any better today?" This was a manager.

**What works for me**

What does work for me is the support and understanding of others around me.

In my world working with apprentices, some with non-visible disabilities like dyslexia, dyscalculia, and mental health issues, letting them know that they can help each other. That it doesn't stop me from doing a good job, I just need a little consideration and help (I am a working living example if you like). Showing them that having some support is not something to be embarrassed about, but just evens the playing field, to feel safe sharing, and to know that people understand and want to help.



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