

Inclusive  
Employers



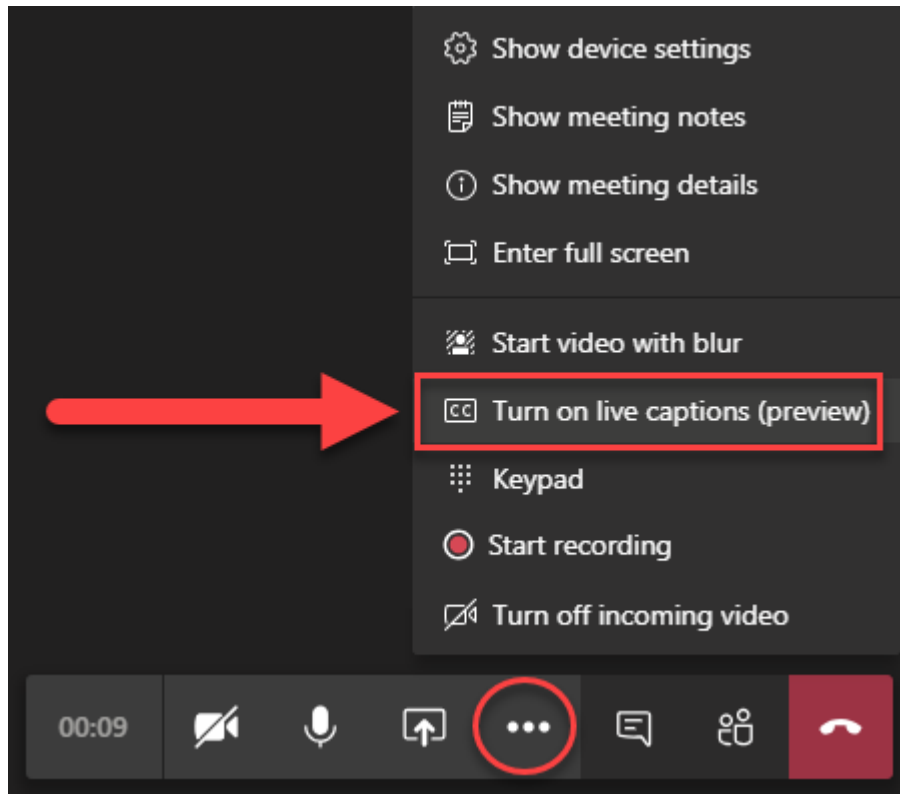
# Disability as an asset

Laura Summers (she/her)

Senior Inclusion and Diversity Consultant

# Tech check

## Need captions?



This is an interactive session

- Please keep your cameras off
- Put yourself on mute unless speaking
- Feel free to use the chat box throughout

This session is being recorded

## Sound problems?

- Check your computer sound
- Check joining instructions
- Leave and re-join

# Today's Session

- Explore the legislation and terminology around disability.
- Disability through a new lens
- Understand reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- Taking steps to build an inclusive environment for disabled people in the workplace
- Explore the role of the managers in supporting disabled colleagues

Say hello and where  
you're joining us from  
in the chat

# Using Inclusive Language

## Identity First Language (IFL)

**when you refer to someone as their identity first, then as a person**

**Using IFL, you would say “an autistic person” rather than “a person with autism.”.**

## Person First Language (PFL)

**when you put the person first, then the condition, impairment or disability**

**a person who is disabled” rather than “a disabled person.”**

Many disabled and neurodivergent activists advocate for identity first language. However, it is important we respect and use the language for individuals that they prefer and feel most comfortable with.



**WeThe15**

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHCDvdCaJhl>



# What types of Disability or conditions can you think of?

*Use the chat box to answer*



# The Equality Act UK – Definition of Disability

“A physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”

# Disability Facts and Figures



**53.5%**

What percentage of disabled people aged 16-24 in the UK were employed?

**45-59**

Across which age groups were the biggest employment gaps?

**42%**

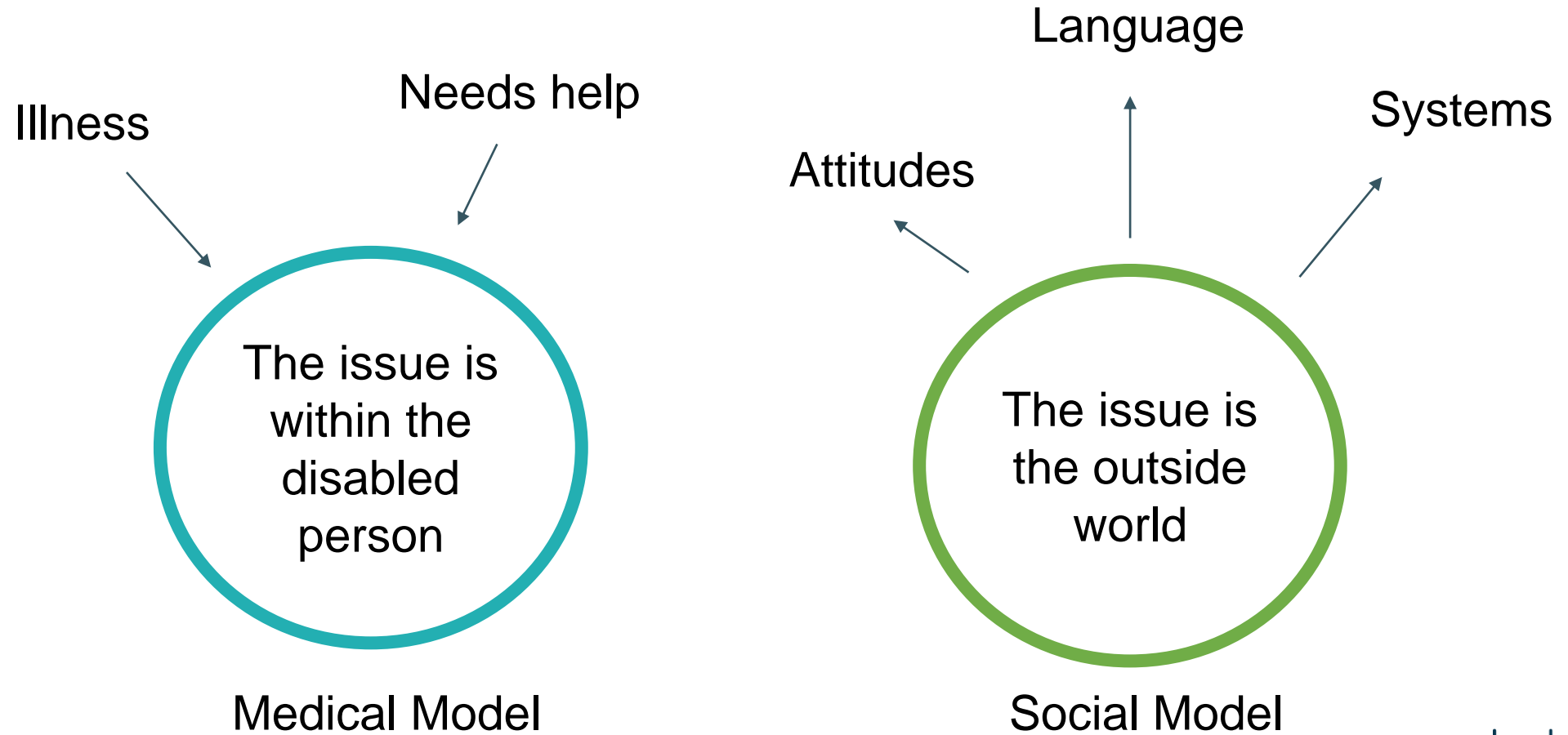
What percentage of disabled people who have been in work or education or training have experience negative attitudes from management?

**20%**

There are over 14 million people in the UK with a long-term illness, impairment, or disability. What percentage of those people were born with their impairment/disability?



# Medical Model vs Social Model



# What is Ableism?

*Use the chat box to answer*



Ableism is the **discrimination** of and **social prejudice against** people with disabilities based on the belief that **typical abilities are superior**. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that **disabled people require 'fixing'** and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as 'less than,' and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities.

Definition by Access Living

# Impacts of Ableism

The media reinforcement of impairment, framing disability as tragic **or** inspirational

Only 2.7 percent of characters in the 100 highest-earning movies of 2016 were depicted with a disability

The proportion of working age disabled people living in poverty (27%) is higher than the proportion of working age non-disabled people (19%)

1 in 3 disabled people feel there's a lot of disability prejudice

The average disabled household faces £975 a month in extra costs

Children with disabilities are twice as likely to be bullied at school

# Changing Perceptions

## How are disabled people often perceived?

Disabled employees are often seen as:

- Requiring support
- Requiring adaptations
- Requiring time off
- Requiring costly interventions
- Requiring extra time

## What strengths do disabled people tend to have?

- Dedicated
- Hard working
- Resilient
- Good at problem solving
- Adaptable
- Good at planning
- Diversity of thought and experience

# What can we gain by focusing on disabled people's strengths?

Your organisation will benefit from:

- Increased productivity
- Greater innovation
- Greater representation of the communities that you serve/represent
- Diverse perspectives
- Increased disclosure rates
- Greater 'buy-in' to organisational value



# What barriers might disabled people face in the workplace?

*Use the chat box to answer*



# Barriers in the Workplace

Inaccessible off-site meetings or team socials

Lack of closed captions or audio descriptions

Frequent use of metaphors or unclear language

Invasive personal questions

Using someone's mobility aid for entertainment or a footrest

Assumptions that colleagues cannot advance their career due to their disability

Exclusionary meeting 'etiquette'



# Removing barriers

## Physical

- Workspace
- Technology
- Facilities
- Access

## Emotional

- Active listening
- Genuine curiosity
- Non judgemental

## Working Style

- Workload
- Change management
- Communication style
- Breaks

## Work Life Balance Support

- Flexible working
- Phased transitions
- Openness to change
- Time off for appointments

# Reasonable Adjustments

make a change by eradicating or reducing an employee's disadvantage due to their disability.

Legally, UK employers must put into place reasonable adjustments when an employee has a disability.



What's 'reasonable' will depend on each situation. The employer/manager needs to consider carefully if the adjustment:

- will remove or reduce the disadvantage for the person with the disability
- is practical to make
- is affordable by the employer or business
- could harm the health and safety of others

# How can managers support disabled colleagues in the workplace?

*Use the chat box to answer*



# Don't assume... ask!

What's your preferred way of working?

What changes can I make to be a better manager/colleague?

In your words, how does your condition or impairment impact you at work?

What adjustments would help you thrive at work?

How can we work best together?

# How can you be an ally?

Reflect on the gaps in your knowledge

Listen to disabled people – amplify their voices

Reflect on ableist language e.g. the blind leading the blind

Encourage conversation about disability with your colleagues, friends, family

Be an active ally when you witness inappropriate behaviour

**What has resonated  
with you most  
today?**

*Use the chat box to answer*



# Stay in touch with Inclusive Employers



Follow us on LinkedIn  
@Inclusive Employers



Listen and subscribe to our podcast to hear  
conversations around inclusion and diversity