

## WHAT IS IT?

PurpleSpace is the world's only networking and professional development hub for disabled employees, network and resource group leaders and allies from all sectors and trades. <https://www.purplespace.org/>

## WHAT DOES IT DO?

The PurpleSpace mission is “to make it easier for employees to navigate the experience of ill health, disability or the experience of an accident or injury, at the same time as flourishing at work”. This is done by:

- Having created the world's only professional development and best practice exchange for employee network / resource group leaders, allies & champions
- Supporting employers to build vibrant disability networks that help employees to bring their authentic selves to work
- Helping employers to improve business performance by learning directly from disabled employees.

In practical terms, this means:

- Supporting colleagues to navigate difficult life experiences, helping them to manage the soft bigotry of low expectation and helping them to source and access the workplace adjustments they might need.
- Helping employers to learn about building inclusive cultures directly from their own disabled colleagues.
- Highlighting and profiling the plentiful purple talent that contributes to the UK and global economies.

PurpleSpace are uniquely placed to do this because of its 10 years of experience helping employers build conversations between and across internal employee networks as well as building the leadership capacity of internal ‘change agents’.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Despite decades of legislation of workplace adjustments, numbers of people with disabilities in work remain low. The only real way for employees and employers to build “disability confidence” is from the inside out. Specifically:
  - Employers must learn directly from disabled employees to build an “inclusive culture”.
  - Disabled employees must have ‘skin in the game’ to enhance speed and quality of adjustments.
- PurpleSpace research (published in *Secrets & Big News*) found that while 10% of employees are likely to have a disability, employers monitoring disability get only 1-3% responses from their workforce.
- Kate Nash: “Change only happens when individuals claim their own future. You need to be the change you want to see.”

## HOW DID IT GET STARTED?

Kate Nash has spent her career working across a broad spectrum of organisations – including Disability Rights UK, Parliament as well as UK and international companies - to improve the lives of disabled people. She spent 20 years as a relationship manager and consultant for Business Disability Forum enabling large companies to define and deliver best practice.

After standing down from Disability Rights UK in 2006-7, Kate re-focused on “making an important and strategic contribution to the story of disabled people...generating an affirmative, life affirming, can do, sassy, cheeky community of disabled employees – who now have equalities legislation behind them. I don’t want to live in the ‘you have to’ narrative – we have opportunities, skin in the game...[work out] how do we deliver our best selves, deliver workplace adjustments...build skills, know how, techniques and tools to have awkward conversations about how employers can accommodate us.”

Overall, Kate has worked with over 300 companies through Kate Nash Associates and another 450 through Business Disability Forum.

Her extensive experience has led her to transcend the transactional “compliance” approach to equality legislation (which can be a common approach) to focus on the “spirit of the law”.

## HOW DID IT GET STARTED?

Kate had noted several anomalies that hindered progress on disability:

**Lack of trust.** Kate Nash's ground-breaking research report, *Secrets & Big News* – covering 55 employers and 2500 disabled people - revealed that while 10% of a workforce were likely to have a disability, only 1-3% were sharing this information with their employers. Key issues were uncertainty about why data was being collected and how it was being used by employers, which had fostered mistrust and silence.

**Lack of voice.** Kate had also noted that disabled employees “don't use the semantics of disability” because of the nature of their relationship with disability, “a life experience we would prefer not to have”. Making sense of that experience over time [means you] need to have a healthy relationship with yourself, the built environment, other people...[you] need to feel good about yourself as a person with difference...My thought was, in order to have a better iteration between disabled employees and employers we need to start with a better conversation with ourselves”.

**Lack of networks.** While gender, race and LGBTQ+ communities were proliferating, Kate noted that disability networks were “behind the curve”, led by talent less senior than that of other networks and even being seen as problematic by the diversity and inclusion community.

## HOW DID IT GET STARTED?

In response to these issues, Kate Nash Associates was established in 2006 as a boutique consultancy, engaging around 300 companies – including Fujitsu, Barclays, EY, PwC, GSK and Transport for London - in supporting or establishing disability employee networks and resource groups for organisations. With the pro bono support of companies who wanted a “cost-effective and elegant way of bringing network leaders together”,

A steering group of 30 companies provided guidance for the project 18 months prior to launch. They advised not to establish the organisation as a charity inasmuch as “it was felt there were more than enough philanthropic organisations when it comes to disability. We are a b2b organisation delivering professional services to employers”.

Kate launched **PurpleSpace**, the disability world’s own community of employee networks and resource groups, in October 2015 as a limited company.

The logo for PurpleSpace, featuring the word "PurpleSpace" in a purple sans-serif font, enclosed within a white rectangular frame with a purple border.

PurpleSpace

**Building Disability Confidence**  
*From the inside out*

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

**PurpleSpace** was set up with a mission to: "make it easier for employees to navigate the experience of ill health, disability or the experience of an accident or injury, at the same time as flourishing at work."

It operates as a networking and professional development hub for disabled employees, network and resource group leaders and allies from all sectors and trades. Members are able to share experiences and build friendships with their colleagues in other organisations. They can "talk offline, create partnerships, ratcheting up change mechanisms through storytelling campaigns", accessing resources and collateral along the way.

PurpleSpace "helps organisations across all industries and sectors to create Disability Employee Networks and / or Resource Groups. We then help each network to build exceptional engagement strategies so that they can stimulate better conversations about all aspects of disability and business with their internal allies, champions and executive sponsors".

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

In support of the membership networking hub, PurpleSpace offers a range of 'Networkology' services including:

**Facilitating in-house focus groups** with employees to test the appetite to set up a disability network or resource group;

**Delivering 'know-how' sessions** about starting out and building a network or resource group team and establishing the right structure from day one;

**Support to deliver deep-dive sessions** about how to Refresh and Renew a network that is floundering or has lost its direction and leadership;

**Providing high-quality 'stepping up' workshops** that help networks raise their game and improve delivery and output;

**Helping employers find the best approach for building 'disability confidence' from the inside out** and finding strategic alternatives to networks, if needed.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The PurpleSpace Members network includes 267 members across 83 companies:

Acacia Training  
Accenture  
Action for Children  
AIG  
Atos  
BAE Systems  
Barclays  
Berkshire Healthcare National Health Service Foundation Trust  
Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP  
Birmingham City Football Club  
BP  
BT Group plc  
Bouygues  
Care Quality Commission  
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust  
Channel 4  
Computacenter  
Deloitte  
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Department for Transport  
Department for Work & Pensions  
Department of Culture, Media and Sport  
Deutsche Bank  
Disability Co-operative Network  
Eli Lilly  
Enterprise Cars  
E.ON Energy  
Essex Police  
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
Eversheds LLP  
EY UK  
EY EMEA  
Financial Conduct Authority  
Financial Ombudsman Service  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Fujitsu  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Government Legal Department  
Gowling WLG  
Graeme K Whippy Ltd

Health and Safety Executive  
Herbert Smith Freehills  
Home Office  
House of Parliament  
HS2  
HSBC  
ING  
ITV  
Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation  
KPMG  
Legal Aid Agency  
Lloyd's Insurance  
Lloyds Banking Group  
Ministry of Defence  
Ministry of Justice  
National Audit Office  
National Grid  
National Offender Management Service  
Nationwide Building Society  
New South Wales Department of Family & Community Services  
Norton Rose Fulbright

Northern Trust  
Office for National Statistics  
Oxford Brookes University  
Post Office Limited  
Public Health England  
PwC  
Regard Group  
Remploy Ltd  
Rolls Royce  
Royal Bank of Scotland  
Scottish Parliament  
Shaw Trust  
Shell International Ltd  
Tesco  
Thomson Reuters  
Transport for London  
TSB Bank  
University of Birmingham  
University of York  
West Yorkshire Police  
Willis Towers Watson  
Wyndham City Council

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

### PurpleSpace Membership Costs / Benefits 2018

	Single Membership from 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2018	Multiple Membership from 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2018	Virtual Membership from 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2018
<b>Cost</b>	£375	£2,950	£200
<b>Joining Fee</b>	£80 per membership	£295	£40
<b>Access to the private Member Zone and community of network / resource group leaders</b>	1 person	Up to 20 people (cost breakdown of £147.50 per person)	1 person
<b>Option to swap member names if lead person moves on</b>	Can swap once in a year	Yes unlimited	No
<b>One to one face to face coaching</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>One to one skype coaching</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Face to face networking and learning events</b>	1 place at 3 events per year	1 place at 8 events per year	No
<b>Access to all best practice materials and resources</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Webinar Programme with access to archive</b>	1 place at 4 webinars per year	Unlimited	Unlimited
<b>Attend our Annual Member Reception</b>	1 place	Up to 3 places	No
<b>Use of PurpleSpace logo and #PurpleLightUp logo</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

## WHAT MAKES IT DISTINCTIVE?

PurpleSpace has undertaken a number of unique projects as part of its work to develop its community of disability networks.

**An online Member Zone** providing access to collateral material to support employee networks and disabled colleague engagement; opportunities to connect and collaborate with other change agents.

**Learning and development and networking events and webinars, insight publications and briefings** which are focused on topics of greatest interest to the disabled employee network leaders who are PurpleSpace members.

**A Purple Confidence national working group** to highlight the personal struggles of employees who acquire a disability and develop tools for building inner confidence and resilience.

**A Purple Stories toolkit** to encourage the creation of a vast and vibrant community of disabled employee story-tell to drive and sustain culture change in their organisations.

**A #VirtuallyPurple** guide to help organisations understand the benefits of using social media to drive better conversations with employees as well as customers.

## WHAT MAKES IT DISTINCTIVE?

***In The Chair***, a distillation of hints and tips from the most exceptional PurpleSpace network leaders about how to set up and deliver high-performing networks.

**#purpletalk**, a virtual community-building effort by PurpleSpace members at KPMG, Fujitsu and Shaw Trust to “promote the authentic stories of disabled people”. As an extension of this social media presence, use of the hashtag **#PurpleLightUp** led to many companies lighting their buildings in purple on the International Day of Disabled People 3 December 2017 – on which disability networks, resource groups and organisations celebrate the economic contribution of disabled employees - and it is anticipated this will be repeated in 2018.

**Resources and know-how for champions, allies and executive sponsors**, created in response to PurpleSpace members offering to help create a common understanding about what makes a “great” disability champion.

## WHAT IMPACT DO WE SEE?

While a formal impact report has yet to be published, anecdotal evidence has emerged regarding outcomes of PurpleSpace member activities and projects.

Purple Space members with established networks who use the best practice tools and learning available “**get budgets, more attention from D&I colleagues, improving levels of connection and iteration [as well as] improved governance of networks and organisation**”.

**Member companies have launched their own bespoke campaigns** with the support of PurpleSpace resources including Shell (‘Be Yourself’), Barclays (‘This Is Me’) and Fujitsu (‘Be Completely You’).

The **rate at which employees share information about their disabilities also increases** – e.g. from 1-3% to 5-8%.

From these networks, **companies develop knowledge about creating change** which can be applied to other functions beyond workplace adjustments for employees. These include recruitment retention/return to work, customer services, IT. **Networks “make friends and influence across the business”**.

**PurpleSpace has changed the language and culture of disability** so it is owned by members of the community.

## WHAT IMPACT DO WE SEE?

PurpleSpace and its employee networks have received praise from Government, business leaders and disability network leaders.

*“When allies collaborate, great things can happen, just like the Purple Space/Equal Approach ‘Civil Service Bursary Scheme’. Nine of our most talented and aspiring network leaders are participating in this ground-breaking 3-year talent programme. Every bursary holder has entered into a mentoring relationship with a someone from the private sector, stimulating great conversations involving allies and champions alike. A growing voice of like-minded spirits are now bringing a range of insights, energy and ideas to the table, helping us to look outside the Civil Service and extend our reach.”*

Philip Rutnam

Permanent Secretary, Home Office & Civil Service Disability Champion

Source: *Building Disability Confidence From the inside out*

*“Raising awareness and disability confidence can create a truly inclusive environment; where everyone can be themselves and where differences are embraced and respected. By offering support to all, a network can assist colleagues to fulfill their potential, line managers to manage requirements and the business to attract and retain the very best talent.”*

Jodie Greer

Chair, enable Network, Shell

Source: *In The Chair: Be the change*

## WHAT IMPACT DO WE SEE?

‘PurpleSpace satisfies my curiosity about what others are doing. It’s a great platform for sharing and I like the idea of combined events too.’

Andy Kneen

Human Resources Manager for Shell Gas in Projects & Technology  
Chair of the enABLE network in the Netherlands

*Source: Spotlight on...our newest PurpleSpace Ambassador Andy Kneen from Shell*

*“There’s a need to develop disability network leaders and ensure that they have the skills and opportunities to enable and develop disabled people within organisations. We’re beginning to see the change in this space too – a brand new community called PurpleSpace is leading the way. Led by Kate Nash as a result of her research into ‘disclosure’ and ‘declaration’ in the workplace, the community is the first of its kind – to support and develop network leaders to enable and promote the talents of disabled employees.”*

David Caldwell, Senior Digital Accessibility Manager  
Barclays

*Source: Building #ourdisabilityconfidence in the 'Third stage of change'*

## WHAT IMPACT DO WE SEE?

*“Having access to SEED executive sponsor Gavin Bounds, COO, Americas & EMEIA as well as Kate Nash Associates and PurpleSpace has also really helped to shape and deliver a Network plan that is aligned to our organisational strategies and objectives. PurpleSpace in particular has provided the opportunity for me to engage with other Network Leaders to understand their plan and approach, sharing notes is always really helpful.*

Sarah Simcoe, Head of Transformation, Improvement & Responsible Business BAS EMEIA  
Fujitsu Global

*Source: Introducing our newest PurpleSpace Ambassador....Sarah Simcoe*

*"I am full of excitement and anticipation that PurpleSpace will open and build multiple new avenues for disability networks and their leaders; developing their skills, sharing resources & initiatives and working together to release disability potential across a wide range of organisations."*

Andy Garrett  
Workplace adjustments manager, GSK

*Source: New professional development network hub for disabled employees*

## HOW COULD IT BE REPLICATED OR EXTENDED?

Asked how best to *replicate* PurpleSpace in other countries beyond the UK, Kate Nash responded that it is more likely that PurpleSpace would instead *expand* under its own brand (a global “network of networks”) or as a “white label” product. We are in the process of consulting with our multinational supporters regarding our options as we seem to build and serve an ever broader community.

*“Unless disabled employees feel that they have skin in the game and that they are the primary change agents, things won’t happen in terms of speed and quality of output”.*