

Business Disability Forum Global Conference: Disability inclusion in a changing world

21 November 2024 (Online)

Speakers



Meet our speakers



Abi James, Barclays (UK)

Abi is a senior digital accessibility consultant at Barclays with more than 20 years of experience helping public sector organizations, developers, and companies enhance their digital accessibility and improve their support for assistive technologies.

Her current role focusses on improving accessibility of Barclays' banking apps and websites as well as refining accessibility processes and standards throughout the organisation. Abi is the Barclays representative on the Business Disability Forum Technology Taskforce and, having used technology to help with dyslexia since school, collaborated with researchers at the University of Southampton on improvements to accessibility standards, education, and practices.



Angela Matthews, Business Disability Forum (UK)

Angela leads Business Disability Forum's policy and research team and specialises in UK work, health, and disability policy. She is an adviser to and research partner on several academic research projects related to health, disability inclusion, and inclusive employment. Angela regularly contributes to HR and disability 'lifestyle' publications.

She has appeared on BBC Radio 4, speaking on topics including women's work and care ethics, and the disability employment gap. She has given evidence at various Parliamentary Select Committee inquiries. Angela has professional experience in diversity and equalities management, disability and workplace adjustments, equalities data management, employee relations, and occupational health. She also holds several postgraduate research qualifications.



Amber Singayachack, SLB (US)

Amber's role at SLB has expanded significantly over the years, thanks to her overly active brain and desire to learn anything and everything about the business. Through her own experiences Amber has learned firsthand that there is no single path to success and that it is ok to venture down your own path, whatever it may look like.

In addition to Amber's full-time role at SLB, she is the North America Lead for SLB ThisAbility Network Employee Resource Group (ERG). ThisAbility is a community that empowers individuals with visible and/or non-visible disabilities, health conditions, and caregivers. As someone with a non-visible disability Amber understands the importance of ERGs. While not visible to those around her, Amber struggled for a very long time trying her best to hold it all together. When she learned about ThisAbility she felt she could finally exhale. By sharing her own experiences, Amber hopes to enable others to do the same. "By taking the time to listen and learn from each other, we can unlock our collective potential."



Anja Uršič, Novartis (Slovenia)

Anja is an associate specializing in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Novartis in Slovenia. She actively represents the voice of people with disabilities and is a member of the Employee Resource Group for people with disabilities. Anja is pursuing her doctoral studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, focusing on disability employment to shift the perception of disability from limitation to untapped potential.

In addition to her academic contributions, Anja, as a board member of the European Blind Union, strives for the rights of visually impaired individuals.



Bela Gor, Business Disability Forum (UK)

Bela is a lawyer with over 20 years' experience of disability discrimination law and best practice. She advises on a variety of subjects ranging from the law and reasonable adjustments in both employment and customer contexts, to consumers in vulnerable situations, and mental health.

Before joining Business Disability Forum, Bela represented disabled clients in some of the earliest cases under the then new Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to test the new law and has influenced the development of the legislation. She continues to write and speak about how disability legislation might be failing disabled people and business and the need for revision and review.



Brendan Roach, PurpleSpace (UK)

On a mission to create impact at scale, Brendan leads PurpleSpace's strategy to accelerate the global growth of the disability Employee Resource Group/Network movement. With nearly 20 years' experience supporting organisations to improve disability confidence, Brendan is passionate about driving employee-led approaches to disability inclusion.

Prior to joining PurpleSpace, Brendan developed and led Business Disability Forum's global strategy where he supported governments, global businesses and national business and disability networks around the world.



Carolanne Minashi, HSBC (UK)

Carolanne has held leadership roles in Talent Management, Leadership Development, Executive Coaching, Employee Relations and Health & Wellbeing. Carolanne joined HSBC in 2021 from her role as Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion at UBS, previously she was at Citi where she started her career. Carolanne is the recipient of the 100 Women in Finance 2023 EMEA Industry Leadership Award, an award presented annually in recognition of exemplary professional talent, business ethics and passion for investing that further define and advance the industry's standards of excellence. Passionate about driving real change, Carolanne is focused on fixing the system rather than fixing the people and driving impact through inclusive leaders.



Christopher Patnoe, Google (UK)

Christopher is the Head of EMEA Accessibility and Disability Inclusion at Google.

He leads Google's efforts around the accessibility of product, policy and partnerships across EMEA - with a particular focus on Emerging Markets. He has almost 30 years experience in Tech working at companies like Apple, Sony Ericsson and Disney where he's built hardware, software, games, and services. He is the chair for the Immersive Captions Community Group with the W3C, is the Accessibility Working Group Co-Chair for the XR Association, and is an independent member of the board for SCOPE.



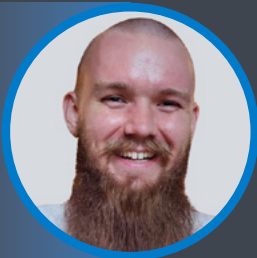
Diane Lightfoot, Business Disability Forum (UK)

Diane is responsible for leading and shaping all aspects of Business Disability Forum's strategy and delivery and for representing the organisation at the highest levels of business and government. Diane is co-Chair of the Disability Charities Consortium, a group of nine major national disability charities in the UK. She is Vice chair of the Disability Confident Business Leaders' Group and also sits on the steering board for the Lilac Review, the CMI Everyone Economy Advisory Committee and the Steering Group for the Global Business Disability Network, hosted by the International Labor Organization. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and is part of the Steering Group for the RSA Inclusive Work, Disability and Ageing Network.



Frederique Loeuillet-Ritzler, Novartis (France/Switzerland)

Fred is a Software Product Line Operations Manager and a passionate Disability advocate at Novartis, where she has worked since 2001. Living with hypermobile Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, she champions changing the narrative around Disability, emphasizing that it's not a bad word but a unique part of who some of us are. She advocates for full accessibility and the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.



Jacob Spargo-Mabbs, Business Disability Forum (UK)

Jacob is Content Manager at BDF. He and the Content Team publish new and reviewed content to our Knowledge Hub for BDF Members and Partners.

Jacob joined BDF in 2019. Before this, he worked in content creation for other third sector organisations and B2B audiences. Jacob is also a Trustee for an education charity.



Jürgen Menze, International Labour Organization (Switzerland)

Jürgen is a Disability Inclusion Specialist in the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch of the International Labour Organization (ILO) – the United Nations specialised agency for the world of work.

He is the coordinator of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network – a worldwide platform of more than 35 multinational enterprises and over 40 national business and disability networks working jointly for disability employment in the private sector. Jürgen has worked for the ILO both in its Swiss headquarters and its office for Central America.



Katie Coates, Business Disability Forum (UK)

Katie studied law at the University of York and has a continued interest in employment law, professional ethics, equality and human rights. As a Senior Disability Business Partner, Katie works closely with BDF Partner organisations to enable them to achieve their strategic goals in disability inclusion. Her passion lies in neurodiversity, accessible workplaces and seeing disability representation and inclusion at all organisational levels.



LaMondré Pough, CEO, Billion Strong and visionary and esteemed expert in the field of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (US)

LaMondré's journey is a testament to resilience, passion, and impact. Diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy before his second birthday, he surpassed expectations by transforming obstacles into platforms for advocacy and empowerment. LaMondré stands at the forefront of creating transformative spaces where every individual can experience a profound sense of belonging. His approach is not just about consultation and strategy; it's about building a legacy of inclusion that will empower future generations. LaMondré's dedication champions the belief that understanding and embracing the unique stories of all individuals enhances corporate culture, drives innovation, and secures sustainable competitive advantages.



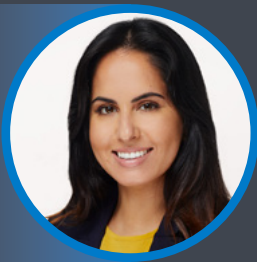
Neil Milliken, Atos (UK)

Neil's role is to help organisations move from disability confidence to disability competence; setting strategy and providing governance at group level, simultaneously delivering change programmes that resulting better technology for customers and staff, embedding inclusive practice into the processes of organisations with thousands of employees and turnovers of billions. He firmly believes that accessibility and disability inclusion is a business topic and created the ESG aligned framework that Atos deploy for their accessibility program. Neil is dyslexic and has ADHD, and advocates for people with neurodivergent conditions as well as other disabilities and additional needs.



Renee Anastasi, HSBC Technology & Services (US)

Renee Anastasi has been working at HSBC for 21 years. She is a US Co-Chair of the US HSBC Ability Employee Resource Group, US Lead for Balance-IT for GCB 4 Women, Business Manager for Global Balance supporting the Americas, an ally supporting all the Employee Resource Groups in the US. Renee is a four-time Culture Hero Award winner at HSBC, and a three-time Americas Inclusive Leader Award Winner. Renee has Crohn's Disease and associated disabilities related. For over 30 years she has been able to manage her personal and professional life while managing an incurable disease. Renee believes in the continuous importance in changing the narrative to show the strength and resilience of those dealing with the typical life needs along with their extra.



Rubeena Singh, International Labour Organization (Canada)

Rubeena is a Senior Research Consultant with experience at the International Labour Organization and Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia. She recently led research on disability inclusion in ESG and authored white papers on innovation, entrepreneurship, and deep-tech ecosystems. Rubeena previously served as a Speech Language Pathologist for 8 years. She holds a Master in International Development and a Master of Health Sciences. Rubeena has lived and worked in Canada, Cambodia, Spain, England, and Saudi Arabia.



Sabine Lobnig, Mobile & Wireless Forum (Austria)

Sabine is the MWF's Director for Communications. The MWF is the international association of companies with an interest in mobile and wireless communications including the evolution to 5G and the Internet of Things. One of the MWF's main projects is the Global Accessibility Reporting Initiative. GARI's mission is to inform consumers about existing accessibility solutions in the market today and help them identify devices with features that best help their individual needs. This includes mobile phones with built-in screen readers, "simple access" for persons who find today's user interfaces overwhelming, Wearables with haptic feedback, Smart TVs that allow voice recognition for accessing features, or mobile apps that have been developed specifically to help overcome a barrier in daily life like finding accessible locations.



Sarah Eason, Business Disability Forum (UK)

Sarah joined BDF in 2022 as the lead for the Business Partner Team and is now Head of Memberships, overseeing the successful delivery of our Member and Partner offers, ensuring all our stakeholders are maximising the benefits we offer, better including disabled employees, customers and service users in their organisations. Sarah is also responsible for the recruitment of new Members and Partners into BDF Membership.



Satya Shree, Novartis (India)

Satya is the Global Transparency Lead in Legal and Assurance at Novartis. She is a management graduate and has been with the company for over six years, leading multiple projects. She is based in Hyderabad, India and is passionate about adapting to innovative technology and advocating for animal welfare. Satya has been living with muscular dystrophy, specifically LGMD, since the age of 15, which affects her mobility. Despite the challenges, she continues to stay strong in her personal and professional life.



Stephie Elms, Novartis (Switzerland)

Stephie is globally responsible as Head of Disability Equity and Neuroinclusion at Novartis, a global pharmaceutical firm employing over 77,000 people. In her three decades at Novartis, she has lived and worked in Germany and Singapore and now calls Switzerland home. Educated in pharmaceutical sciences, she has spent most of her career working in and around manufacturing operations. Her passion is to ensure all employees at Novartis have as strong a sense of belonging as she experiences.