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Working towards consistent best practice, worldwide

‘Accountability in Action’

GSK’s Global Disability Confidence Council

The Business Drivers – the Who – the How - the Value Add - the Learning

An ILO Global Business Disability Network (GBDN) Member Profile

By Susan Scott-Parker OBE

GSK: established its Global Disability Confidence Council in 2014

GSK is a science led global healthcare company; headquartered in the UK, employing in excess of 100,000 people with operations in more than 120 countries.

This **ILO (International Labor Organisation) Global Business Disability Network (GBDN)** profile captures the highlights, edited for conciseness, of our informal conversations with:

- ▶ **Susan Scott-Parker** Advisor Workplace Adjustments ILOGBDN
- ▶ **Nick Hiron** - Senior Vice President Global Ethics and Compliance, CET member & chair of Global Disability Council
- ▶ **Andy Garrett** - Workplace Adjustments Service Programme Lead and co-lead of GSK's Disability Confidence Network – global employee resource group

We are grateful to both Nick and Andy for taking the time to so generously share their learning and experience as they pioneer this cross-business approach to developing best practice as an employer and as a provider of goods and services.



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▶ **GSK: one of the first to establish a Global Disability Confidence Council**

‘Disability Confidence’

is the term frequently used to describe the corporate best practice that ensures dignified and equitable access & inclusion for people with disabilities as valued colleagues, potential colleagues, customers, shareholders & fellow citizens.

Disability Confident organisations:

- ▶ Understand the importance and relevance of disability inclusion to all aspects of their business
- ▶ Actively identify and address barriers to improve accessibility and build disability inclusion
- ▶ Make adjustments to ensure equity and access to opportunities for all
- ▶ Actively challenge bias and negative assumptions about disability



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Why did GSK create the Global Council in 2014?

- ▶ Leaders had long recognised the importance of inclusion of the world's more than 1.3 Billion persons with disabilities
- ▶ We believe **disability confidence is essential** to understanding our customers, colleagues and attracting and retaining the best talent
- ▶ We saw the need to enable dignified and equitable treatment for all, in every jurisdiction
- ▶ We have learned from progress in USA and UK to proactively drive the best practice culture that enables real disability inclusion worldwide
- ▶ Leaders were clear that this aligns directly with core GSK values:

Patient focus, Integrity, Respect and Transparency

Who sits on the Council? How senior is it?

- ▶ Founding chair was then President Global Manufacturing & Supply
- ▶ Since 2018 the current chair is Nick Hiron, SVP Global Ethics & Compliance, who is a member of the Corporate Executive Team (CET) and reports to CEO
- ▶ Mostly CET-1 senior leaders representing Vaccines; Consumer Healthcare; Pharma Supply Chain, R&D business units plus core business services leaders, including HR, Technology (IT) Procurement, Legal, Communications and Estates & Facilities
- ▶ **Council members hold senior accountability** for delivering the disability confidence strategy, workstream action plans and implementing council decisions
- ▶ Additional full council members include internal Global Disability Confidence Network Employee Resource Group (ERG) co-leads Andy Garrett & Tracy Mitchelson, plus Kate Nash as an independent external advisor

What is fundamental to GSK's approach to improving its disability performance as an employer?

- ▶ We trust our people and want to **give everyone the tools and flexibility that they need to be productive** in their work. **We support adjustments (accommodations) to remove barriers** and enable colleagues with disabilities to access equal opportunities and be their authentic selves at work.
- ▶ **Disability inclusion aligns with our core values** and is more effective globally than a medical and legal compliance approach which can vary widely in different markets
- ▶ Our focus is not on someone's private medical status – but to provide the environment and tools for each individual's success, helping them to thrive and perform at their best
- ▶ **Solutions are routinely approved without needing to formally involve health & well-being/occupational health practitioners for medical assessments.** We acknowledge people rarely ask for support they do not need.



How has the Global Council added value?

- ▶ We have gained sustained commitment from the very top – as evidenced by our CEO signing up to the Valuable 500
- ▶ The Council played a crucial role in the design & launch of the workplace adjustment service & funding approvals model
- ▶ Our connection to ‘employee voices’ continues to strengthen. We have more than 850 members of our Disability Confidence Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) with new country chapters in UK, Belgium & Poland & one emerging in Canada
- ▶ Building universal design into our work environments and processes from day one brings real value. Ease of use by our customers & patients of our products & tools clearly aligns with our values & commercial objectives
- ▶ We continue to implement many of the accessibility and usability enablers identified by our Employee Resource Group. i.e., accessibility at our sites and to our technology, emergency evacuation, inclusive design & on-going roll out of the workplace adjustment service
- ▶ The Council’s structure and way of working has been seen to add such value that GSK now has similar global councils to address Gender, LGBTQ+, Race & Ethnicity



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How does the Global Disability Council get results?

- ▶ Council members are accountable for implementing council decisions and delivering SMART objectives within their workstream action plans as well as championing disability inclusion messaging through their lines of business
- ▶ The Council provides the governance that shapes our journey towards being a more consistently disability confident and inclusive company worldwide
- ▶ We monitor what we call our 'VoC' evidence – Voice of our Customers, in the form of feedback from our Disability Confidence Network (DCN) Employee Resource Group members and wider employee consultations – and act on what we learn
- ▶ The Council makes it easier for local leaders to deliver the business wide improvements that also benefit people with disabilities



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The Council facilitates progress for our in-country leaders

- ▶ The Council sets the global direction that drives the journey towards a more consistent approach
- ▶ We launched a Global Inclusive Design Standard for our estate – soon to be refreshed to include wider ‘usability for all’ considerations, plus access to the built environment. This Global Standard enables our in-country leaders to readily move beyond inconsistent local building codes, to enable dignified and equitable access for customers, colleagues, potential colleagues and visitors worldwide
- ▶ The Global Council has made it clear that all communications should be accessible, by agreeing a process and budget providing for live captioning in meetings and events

Does the Council have its own centralised budget for disability?

- ▶ We would advise caution to any organisation contemplating creating a central disability budget given how difficult it is to predict what will be needed.
- ▶ Our Disability Council workstream initiatives are funded by the relevant business units accountable for delivery of their aspect of accessibility.

For example:

- ❖ *Workplace adjustments/accommodations costs are approved and funded centrally within Facilities Services to speed getting solutions to employees without needing line manager approval*
- ❖ *Employees don't need to 'qualify' as having a disability to receive adjustments support*
- ❖ *Accessibility (Inclusive design) assessments at our sites, and related upgrade works, are funded within the relevant business unit's Real Estate capital program and site facilities services*
- ❖ *When employees have the solutions they need, adjustments costs are aggregated and cross-charged back to the relevant business unit [quarterly] showing visibility of overall (low) cost of providing colleagues with the tools and solutions they require*
- ❖ *Assistive technology investment is managed and funded within the Tech (IT) organisation*
- ❖ *The council has project management support to facilitate our quarterly meetings and a dedicated Disability Confidence project lead role coordinating our workstream action plans.*

What do GSK leaders say and do that drives this transformation?

- ▶ Leadership communications are crucial- we see our Disability Council leaders and other senior champions in Town Halls and internal social media channels reaffirming the business and ethical rationale for disability confidence and inclusive best practice, reinforcing their active support for the Council's work
- ▶ We have found the messages: “we want everyone to be comfortable being themselves at work” and “we trust our people” to be compelling. Inclusion and Diversity is a top priority for GSK and is something our CEO talks about regularly
- ▶ Across the company we are increasingly talking about ‘being accommodating’ rather than ‘making accommodations’ . From our experience it’s often a culture and behaviour change rather than policy change that makes the biggest impact
- ▶ Our senior executive support for [#PurpleLightUp](#) sends the message to internal & external audiences, as buildings & digital platforms go purple on December 3, the UN International Day for Persons with Disabilities, and encourages helpful conversations with colleagues not yet quite on board as they ask: So what’s this PURPLE all about?

What are the Council's immediate priorities?

- ▶ Developing a new, measurable 3- year strategic disability confidence plan (2021-23) to be agreed by our Corporate Executive Team
- ▶ Continue to invest in creating a more accessible and usable built environment, based on assessments at GSK sites against local codes and GSK's own Global Inclusive Design {built environment} Standards
- ▶ Rolling out our Workplace Adjustment Service to more countries
- ▶ Building the skills and knowledge of all our people so they become more disability confident & actively support equal opportunities and inclusion for people with disabilities
- ▶ We are keen to join with other organisations and networks worldwide who share our aim to ensure rights, freedoms, dignity and inclusion for people with disabilities

What advice would you offer to the CEO of any multinational company seeking to benefit from your experience?

- 1. Set a clear and bold ambition** – what is the change you want to see?
- 2. Approach delivering this business objective as you would embed any business priority**
- 3. Have passion yourself** – believe in the value of disability confidence throughout your business & appoint executive sponsors who will champion that cause and persevere - you won't deliver potential value by just ticking boxes
- 4. Communicate how improving your disability performance aligns firmly with your core business values and commercial objectives**
- 5. Set clear expectations** that this business transformation needs leadership and buy in from across every part of the organization
- 6. Set clear deliverables** and ensure that any similar Council has the authority, resources and leadership needed to facilitate the work

What advice would you offer to the CEO of any multinational seeking to benefit from your experience?

- ▶ Don't get bogged down in a compliance culture, mapping legal complexities and various definitions of disability. Best practice minimises legal risk while turning your commitment to treating people fairly to business benefit.
- ▶ Disability confidence should be values driven and enable productivity, engagement & enhanced customer experience.
- ▶ It is essential to start by listening to your own people. It is crucial to have the voice of employees at Council meetings. Ground your work in an understanding of how things are actually working.
- ▶ Learn from other companies and from those 'National Business Disability Networks' (NBDNs) affiliated with the ILO Global Business and Disability Network, such as those in Austria, Germany, Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Kenya, Peru, Sri Lanka, the UK and Uganda.

▶ Positioning disability inclusion as a commercial and ethical priority

- ▶ The ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) is the world's only such coming-together of leading multinational corporations working with the ILO – the United Nations agency on work issues – in our commitment to benefit businesses, persons with disabilities as well as economies and communities across the globe.
- ▶ At country-level, we enable our multinational members to promote consistent good practice by leveraging the ILO GBDN's unique network of affiliated National Business and Disability Networks.
- ▶ To learn more about how to become an ILO GBDN member, please feel free to contact [**businessanddisability@ilo.org**](mailto:businessanddisability@ilo.org)