

Northumbria University – Disability Action Plan

Four Strategic Aims

Aim 1: Access to Spaces

Ensure physical and digital environments are inclusive for all, including those with hidden and neurodivergent conditions, so that all disabled people can work, study, thrive and belong.

Key Actions:

- Collaborate with Estates on accessibility improvements.
- Review AccessAble integration.
- Champion unified approach to physical and digital accessibility.
- Monitor evolving disability regulations and sector best practices.
- Strengthen support for disabled staff and students.
- Remove barriers to career progression and professional development for disabled staff.

Aim 2: Safety to Share

Ensure Northumbria University is a safe, respectful and supportive place for individuals to disclose any disability and have their needs taken seriously.

Key Actions:

- Review existing policies and processes for gaps, to support disability disclosure.
- Embed disability inclusion in the leadership, structure and strategic planning of EDI.
- Improve visibility and efficiency of support processes and key policies.
- Partner with colleagues and student networks to build trust and share positive stories related to disclosure.
- Foster a culture of psychological safety and equip leaders to respond supportively.

Aim 3: Culture of Belonging

Empower disabled staff and students by fostering a culture of unity and belonging, speaking in terms of 'us' and 'we' rather than 'you' or 'them'.

Key Actions:

- Enhance the visibility and accessibility of the online resource hub.
- Communicate inclusive best practices and anti-ableism messages, tailored for staff and students.
- Strengthen the Disability Staff Network.
- Promote research on disability and neurodiversity.
- Develop cultural competence among leaders and managers.

Aim 4: Learning to Understand

Understand and learn from lived, intersectional experiences of our community, recognising aspects of identity that interact to shape individual experiences.

Key Actions:

- Host listening groups with disabled staff (visible, non-visible, physical etc.).
- Share learnings from student disability support (e.g., Universal Design for Learning).
- Collect and analyse disability data to drive improvements in policies, practices and culture.
- Create safe and inclusive spaces for conversations about language and terminology related to disability.