

# The media's role in changing perceptions towards disabled people

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# ***Visible metaphors can be powerful ways of fixing concepts in peoples minds'-RNIB***

Importance;

**Attitudes are seen to play a key role in achieving equality & inclusion** because it may translate into behaviour towards an individual or group

**Raising motivation and expectation**-only 9% of employers think that there is usually a strong business case for hiring a disabled person

**The use of positive language and images** - focussing on the people, rather than just the impairments - can help to improve both the public image and the self-image of disabled people.

# Making people more aware of disability



*'The very fact that previous representations of disability have been narrow, confused and unimaginative leaves the way open for disabled writers and film makers. What we can produce can blow the past away.'*

- Disabled people over the years have been marginalised within and through the media.
- This is starting to improve, especially post Para Olympics and with sector champion/Broadcasting sector work

### **Key challenges;**

- The media still tends to use the medical model of disability
- The focus is on the **impairment** more than the individual
- Disabled people are **under-represented** both in terms of employment in the media & portrayal in the media
- Lots of media forms are **inaccessible**
- Mainstream media **do not consistently recognise** the disabled art, media culture

# Evidence of the problem we are trying to address:

British Attitudes Survey (BSAS)-many respondents expressed views that suggest **they see disabled people as less capable** than non-disabled people

(BSAS)-Disabled people were more likely to feel that it is a health condition alone that prevents disabled people from living a full life  
'We need an **equality of experience**'

Diamond annual diversity data (2017)-in **Broadcasting** only 6.5% are disabled on/off screen



“Everyday equality is about ensuring that disabled people aren’t made to feel inferior, aren’t treated unfairly, aren’t overlooked because of their impairment or condition. **It’s about fairness, justice and rights** – at home, at school, at work and in our communities. -Scope

# Incentivising good practice, deterring discrimination

*'The Green Paper acknowledges that there is a significant way to go to ensure buy-in of necessary actors, bodies & stakeholders across society to achieve the action needed to monumentally shift attitudes & outcomes for disabled people...'* MS Society



# Views from Stakeholders-response to the Green Paper on Work, Health & Disability

What they want;

‘Need to **explicitly address stigma and discrimination**, the Government should be guided by approaches such as Time to Change & See Me...need to champion a lived experience led approach to stigma and discrimination’- RCPCH

‘It was suggested that a **campaign with high profile figures** with disabilities would highlight the skills and expertise of disabled people and the fact they are capable of achieving and maintaining senior role.’-Caritas

‘**Create real and lasting change**, which will only come about by changing societal & cultural attitude’-VAL

‘Movement is needed away from the implicit assumption of the current system and culture-that there is **‘something wrong with unemployed people’** to understanding the support mechanisms needed-BPS

‘**Fight stigma & encourage disclosure**. Challenge negative attitudes’-ACAS

‘Understanding the disadvantages disabled people face is a good place to start. **We need to stop seeing disabled people as a problem’**-Occupational Health & Wellbeing 9 Jan 2017

‘**Engage the media in a positive campaign** to show the skills that people with disabilities have and the contributions they can and are making to the place of work’-United Response, from GP Consultation

# Some ways to make disabled people more visible as active participants in social life

- **Normalising**- public perceptions by making disabled people visible
- **Promoting positive success stories** of 'heros' and ordinary people
- **Improving knowledge and business perceptions** of disabled peoples capabilities

## See the economic value-challenge stereotypes

- Challenge stereotypes-such as seen as less economically successful & hard/expensive to engage
- Advertising/business should recognise the spending power of disabled people.
- The UK's 11.9 million disabled people are said to have disposable income collectively worth £80bn.

## Employ more disabled people in broadcasting sector

- Broadcasters to use disabled people as actors, presenters, screen writers and in story lines
- Disabled actors are being trained
- Agencies have disabled actors/models on their books
- Marketing companies use disabled actors to show the diverse appeal of their products

## Story-telling important

- Ordinary people's stories demonstrate the possible
- Disabled icons eg. MP's, stars, models, business leaders influence cultural perceptions of capability, difference
- Fashion influences public perception of beauty & difference



# Role models & images in media-promoting greater social awareness of people with disabilities –in work, sports and television



# Strictly fans praise 'inspirational' Jonnie

- JONNIE BE GOOD! Strictly Come Dancing's Jonnie Peacock praised as an 'inspiration' after dancing a jive on brand new blade leg
- High social media traffic-over 1.1m on Linked in day after



# Ad Campaign of the Week: Volkswagen Ad Features Art from Blind Photographer

The Volkswagen ad featuring Pete Eckert a blind photographer. The visuals and style behind the ad could help people see the brand as more modern and innovative. Seen as the **'best advert of all time'**. To create the photos, Eckert started by exploring the car with his hands, feeling and tapping to get a sense of its shape and form before photographing it in darkness with a long-exposure camera. He then moved around the Arteon with a series of coloured lights to create the vivid, kinetic-feeling 'halo' of colour that you can see in the finished photos.



## **This approach contributes to; Art. 8-UN (CRPD)-Awareness Raising**

- Participation (in wider society, consultation and decision making)
- Promoting awareness of capabilities & contributions
- Duties such as Equality Act, Public Sector Equality Duty
- The social model of disability says that disability is caused by the way society is organised and the products and services that are offered to people, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.
- How the UK is addressing negative attitudes towards disabled people

### **Some ways to drive change;**

- Broadcasting/advertising sectors
- Sector champions as catalysts for change
- Good practice examples are shared
- Baseline data on perceptions & attitudes
- Disabled people & their representative organisations will be invited to participate
- Disabled icons & ordinary people's stories
- Delivery is co-designed