

# DISABILITY CAFÉ

Graduate Recruiter's Disability Café  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2014

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*for open discussion*

## Introduction & Context

Allen & Overy hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> Disability Café for Graduate Recruiter's at their offices on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The focus of this Café was Best Practice in relation to disability and graduate recruitment; it brought together all of the information that had been amassed from various sources over the past 7 years. This included information gained from research, input from disabled students, insights from university services and feedback from employers.

Nikki Williams, Head of Talent at Allen & Overy, opened the event by welcoming over 30 delegates to the Café and speaking of the importance of a diverse workforce in relation to the success of an organisation.

Helen Cooke, Director of My Plus Consulting & Founder of the Graduate Recruiter's Disability Café Club, also welcomed the delegates and talked about the need to focus on 5 key areas in order to achieve best practice in the recruitment and disability space.

These 5 key areas:

- Strategy
- Your website
- Attraction
- Encouraging openness
- Barrier Free Recruitment

At the end of the Café the delegates would have an in depth understanding of what best practice looked like and would understand what their organisation needed to be doing to ensure that they achieve this.

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## Getting started...

Getting started....

Helen started the delegates thinking about the afternoon's subject by asking them to write on the white table cloths a few words of what they hoped to get out of the event.

Comments included:

- Identifying some 'quick wins'.
- Understanding what needed to be done on a longer-term basis.
- Finding out what other organisations were doing in this space.

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## Our expert...

### Helen Cooke

The first 3 areas of best practice that Helen Cooke spoke about were: Strategy, Websites & Attraction.

Helen started by emphasising the need to have a strategy in order that organisations were clear about what they wished to achieve and how they were going to get there..

Helen then moved on to talk about the need to include information about disability on careers websites; this included information such as the organisation's approach to disability, the support on offer & profiles of disabled employees. The importance of ensuring that this information is easily accessible was emphasised, as well as ensuring that there is a consistency of message.

The third area Helen talked about was Attraction; the 5 areas that were highlighted were:

- Understanding our target market
- Websites
- Events
- Relationships with universities
- Your people

Helen stressed the need to focus on all of them in order to be effective; concentrating on one area only will not

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## Discussion...

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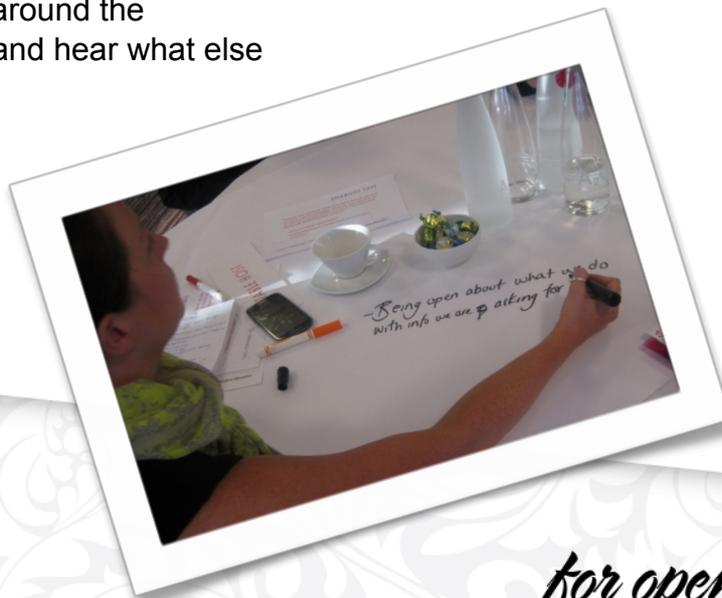
Following Helen's presentations the delegates were asked to consider the following question:

- Taking into account what you have heard, as well as your own knowledge, what do you need to do to ensure that you stand out as a company that achieves Best Practice around your:
  - Strategy?
  - Website?
  - Attraction activities?



In small groups, delegates thought about and discussed what they really needed to be focusing on if they were to make real progress in these areas.

As the delegates spoke they captured their conversations by drawing and writing on the table cloths. The delegates also asked to move around the room in order to continue their discussions with others and hear what else was being spoken about.



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## FEEDBACK

DIFFICULT TO  
GET THOSE  
IN BUSINESS  
TO HAVE POSITIVE  
ATTITUDES TO  
MENTAL HEALTH



AVAILABILITY  
OF DETAILS

ASK PEOPLE TO  
PARTICIPATE  
IN BLOGS



CONTINUOUS  
FEEDBACK: WEBSITE ✓

TRANSPARENCY  
IN RECRUITMENT  
PROCESS

✓✓ TWO TICKS  
ON APPLICATION FORM  
NOT WELL ADVERTISED

### PROFILES



ASKING DISABLED  
GRADUATES TO PARTICIPATE  
IS TOUGH, BUT MANY WILL  
SAY "YES".

ASK STUDENTS  
WHAT THEY HAVE  
ADVERTISED?

## Our expert...

### Helen Cooke

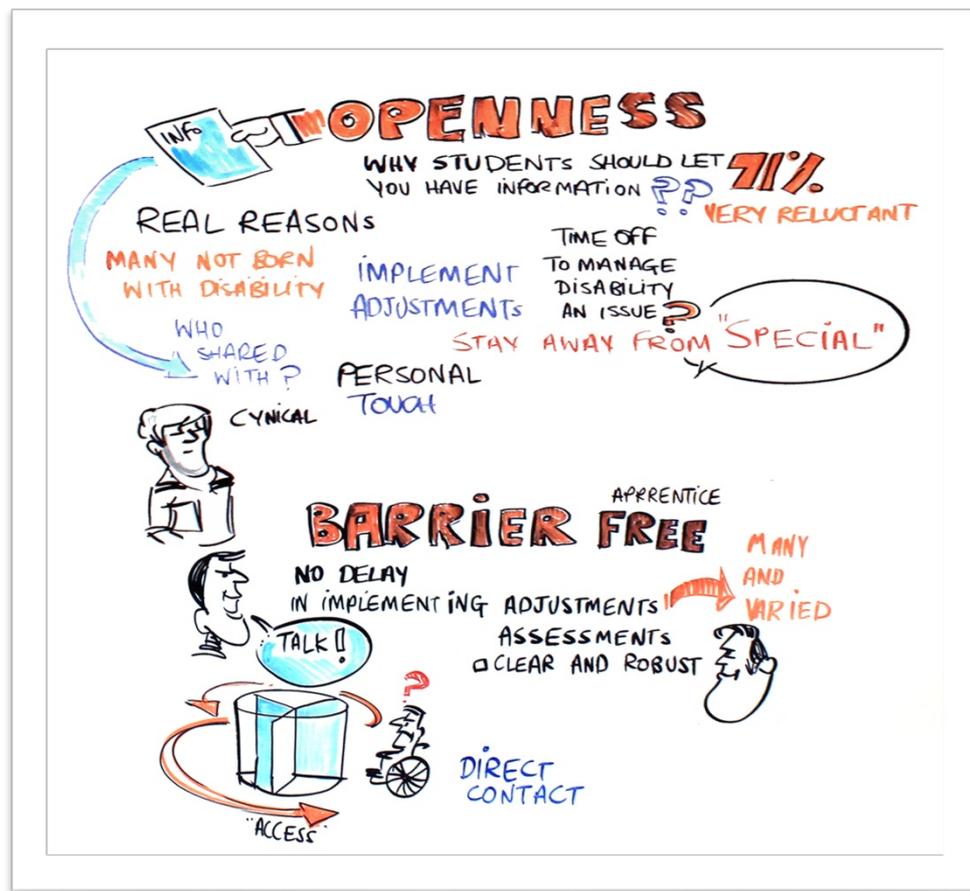
After a tea break, where the delegates enjoyed some very scrummy muffins, Helen continued to talk about best practice this time turning her attention to: Openness and Barrier Free Recruitment.

71% of disabled students are reluctant to inform an employer that they have a disability however without doing so it is unlikely that they will obtain the support they require during the recruitment process. Helen emphasised the need for employers to encourage applicants to be open and talked about how they can best do this.

Helen then went on to talk about ensuring that the recruitment process is 'barrier-free' in the broadest sense of the word; from application through to providing feedback. Helen also talked about what she called the 'other stuff' by which she meant that the entrance was accessible, ensuring reception staff were disability confident, that refreshments were accessible and that breaks were long enough to cater for everyone needs.



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## Discussion...

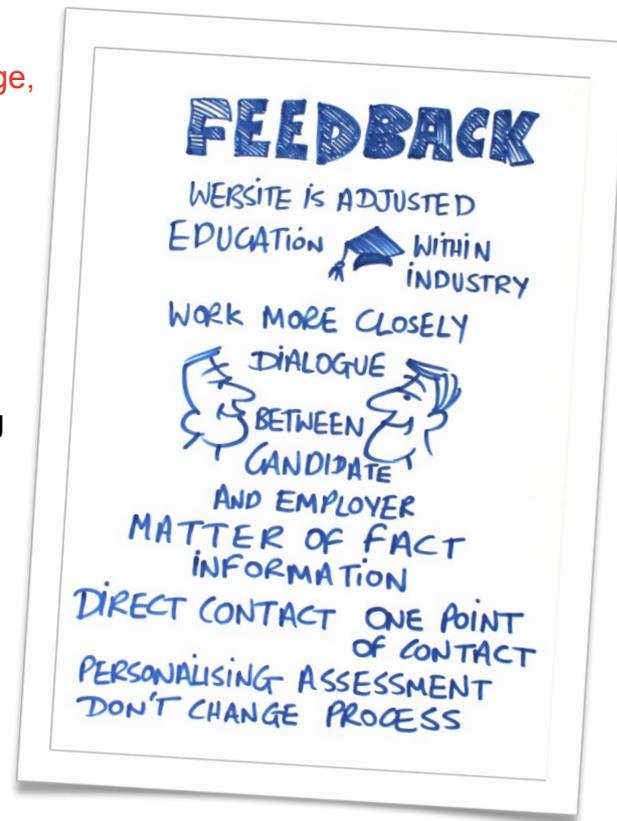
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Following Helen's presentations the delegates were again asked to consider the following question:

- Taking into account what you have heard, as well as your own knowledge, what do you need to do to ensure that you stand out as a company that achieves Best Practice around your:
  - Openness?
  - Ensuring a barrier free recruitment process?

In small groups, delegates again thought about and discussed what they really needed to be focusing on if they were to make real progress in these areas.

As the delegates spoke they captured their conversations by drawing and writing on the table cloths. The delegates also asked to move around the room in order to continue their discussions with others and hear what else was being spoken about.



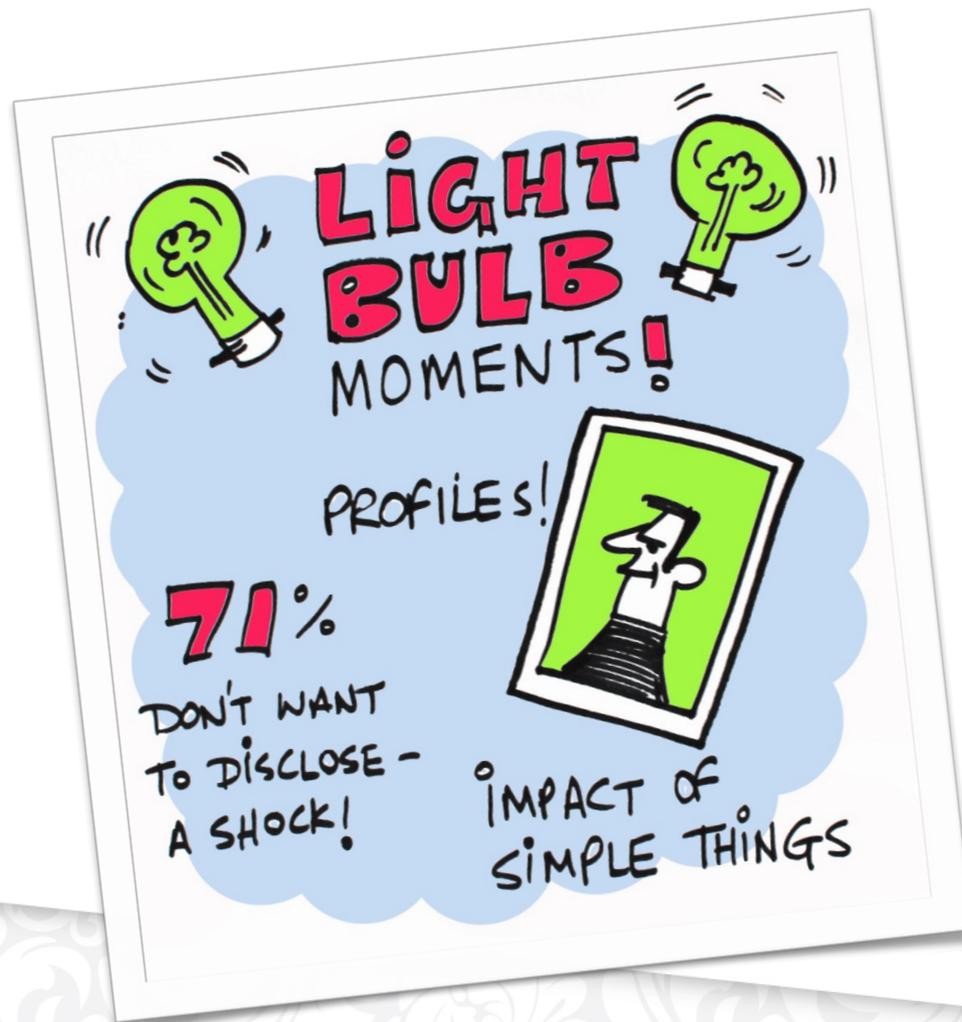
During the final part of the Café, Helen took the participants through the graphic recording of the afternoon so far reminding them of what they had heard, the key questions they had been asked, and the conversations that had taken place.

As they listened, the delegates were asked to think about what had really stood out for them during the discussions that had taken place and what they would be looking to action in their organisations.



Insights...

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## News....

The next event is a Breakfast Seminar; this is taking place on the 30<sup>th</sup> April and will look at how to attracting disabled graduates to apply to your organisation. It will build on what has already been covered to ensure that your activities are effective.

The next Disability Café is taking place on 11<sup>th</sup> June. This Café will look at Barriers to Employment; it will consider whether barriers faced by students and organisations are perceived in the same way.

For those wishing to join the Graduate Recruiter's Disability Café Club you are invited to offset the cost of this Café against membership should you wish to do so. Please contact Helen Cooke for more information.  
[Helen@myplusconsulting.com](mailto:Helen@myplusconsulting.com).  
This offer is open until the 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.

And if you are not yet listed on our pioneering new website [www.greatwithdisability.com](http://www.greatwithdisability.com) then please get in contact to find out about the opportunities to be included.

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## Contact Details

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