

# Talking Inclusion With...

## Series 1, Podcast 6: 10 years of Inclusive Employers

Talking Inclusion With... Stephanie Hurst

**Stephanie** And a very warm welcome to our next Inclusive Employers podcast 'Talking Inclusion with'. I'm Stephanie Hirst, and today we've got a very special episode of our podcast as we're celebrating Inclusive Employers 10th birthday.

But before I introduce our guests, I'll tell you a little bit about us. We're Inclusive Employers, and we support employers to make inclusion an everyday reality. Our mission is to make every workplace an inclusive employer, where every colleague values differences, and can contribute their skills and experiences fully to their organisation.

Now these podcasts are for anyone and everyone who has an interest in inclusion and diversity. In our podcast, we usually share life stories and experiences, we'll learn about best practice, and hear practical advice for employers.

But today, what we're doing it a little bit differently. Today, I'm going to be joined by three people who have been instrumental in the success of Inclusive Employers. Richard McKenna, who is our founder and chair will be joining us - he had the vision for inclusive workplaces 10 years ago, and set up Inclusive Employers to support organisations to think about well, not just diversity, but how and why being inclusive could make their organisations more successful. So Richard, welcome to the podcast.

**Richard** Hi, Steph, how you doing?

**Stephanie** I'm really, really, really good. We've also got Claire Williams. Claire is MD Operations of Inclusive Employers whose consultancy and training is legendary in our sector. Hi, Claire. Welcome to the podcast.

**Claire** Hi, Steph.

**Stephanie** And last but not least, we have Rupert Moyne, MD Corporate Services, who also has been with us right from the very start. Hi, Rupert.

**Rupert** Hi there Steph.

**Stephanie** Now today, as we're celebrating our 10th birthday, we're going to take the opportunity to look back and think about well, how workplace inclusion has progressed over the last 10 years, then we'll look to the present and our key focuses for today. And then finally, take a little look into the future to see what the next 10 years might look like.

So I guess we should start by looking back 10 years ago, I mean, Richard, why did you decide to set up Inclusive Employers, and what were your key motivators right at the very start?

**Richard**

Well, I suppose at the time, I was incredibly frustrated by lack of progress in organisations. I was frustrated by the fact that many organisations were limping along focused on one protected characteristic and activity in that area, and then limping to another protected characteristic, rather than thinking about 'well, how do I create a culture where every single colleague can rock up, be themselves, feel valued and add value'? And the other thing was, I think this was being exacerbated by the fact that the organisations that were supporting businesses were predominantly charitable focused organisations. So they were thinking about it, it was all kind of, 'Oh, aren't we good people, we're being nice to those poor people that are excluded. Let's be nice to this group or that group'.

And I find it utterly patronising. I was thinking, actually, this is about how do we create this environment where everyone can prosper as individuals, and also how that links to the commercial opportunity, so how businesses can really then venture forward and harness those commercial opportunities, through valuing difference. So it was a really sticky time.

**Stephanie**

Because if you're not coming into the workplace and being your true self, you're not operating at your full capability, are you?

**Richard**

Absolutely, and it was, and there was as more and more evidence that was being built up in relation to one protected characteristic or another.

So looking at kind of what was the LGB agenda, then really, because the trans agenda really wasn't at the forefront as it should have been. Or looking at gender issues, or looking at race issues or disability issues. And nobody was linking it together and say, well, actually, this is about every one of us being able to rock up and be ourselves.

**Stephanie** And Claire, your background prior to joining Inclusive Employers is in HR. I mean, why did you decide to join Inclusive Employers, and and was it what you expected?

**Claire** Yeah, my background was in HR. So I've been working in large organisations since graduating really, in HR roles. And I've been thinking this weekend actually, about the start for me was Inclusive Employers.

And it was quite an informal sort of arrangement to start with, I think we agreed that I'd maybe do a couple of days a week for a month. And I never stopped after that. It sort of really took off for there for me, but I mean, I think my HR background really helped it made me feel like I could do something useful because my experience was very much around the employment landscape. And we are all about, you know, inclusion in the context of employment.

So my experience of working on discrimination, talent, all of those sorts of issues really played very well into what we were trying to achieve at Inclusive Employers.

In terms of whether it was what I expected, it was just amazing from the start, Steph, so I don't really know what I expected, but it's been an absolute blast.

**Stephanie** And I'm guessing it feels like it was.. was two minutes ago, not 10 years ago.

**Claire** I can't believe, I just cannot believe we're 10 years old. But then I think we have done so much over the years.

I mean, we've really focused on doing projects with employers, our focus was very much on let's do interesting work. Let's really make change

happen, and we've just done tonnes of stuff. So in that context, yes, I can believe it's 10 years, but it does feel like a very fast 10 years.

**Stephanie** And Rupert, you were there right from the start as well. I mean, why did you think that workplace inclusion was important?

**Rupert** For me, I've always worked in areas where there's a strong sense of social purpose, predominantly in social housing. And I suppose, where it came from, for me, was my last job before Inclusive Employers, was as an operational director within a housing association. I was managing very large teams of people and very diverse teams, and what I learned from that was how important it was to have a means to connect with your teams. And to, in effect, humanise work. So, not try to create something that is other than your life, but it's an opportunity really, it's that thing about bringing your whole self to work. So work is part of your whole lived experience.

And I learned through the work that I was doing, about how that brings commercial opportunity through that level of engagement that you can achieve. And I had started to think around the concept of inclusion through discussions with Richard and with Claire, and about how inclusion could give us the opportunity to really kind of take a step on from that sort of engagement theme that a lot of organisations were looking at at that time.

**Stephanie** And Richard, there must have been some key challenges right at the start that the business faced back in 2011. I guess how did Inclusive Employers kind of support them at the time?

**Richard** Gosh, there were lots of challenges, Steph.

So firstly, the Equality Act have just come in. So all of our business preparation was happening when we knew all the work was being done on the Equality Act.

And in many different ways, all three of us were working on different aspects of that preparation in relation to the Equality Act coming in. So I think the biggest challenge for most organisations was, in a sense, diversity fatigue, so they were all like really fed up with this concept, and I think that's because what was happening was, well, not everyone was fed up, there were majority cultures. And a lot of the decision makers were thinking, "Oh, no, here come the diversity police". And it was so frustrating, because they were seeing this as a threat rather than opportunity. And they hadn't understood, you know, understanding inclusion is another subject, but they were really seeing it as, as this big threat, here comes these people with this, this stick to beat us over the head rather than saying, "actually look at this great commercial opportunity that we've got".

And another big threat was or another big challenge was they saw it as about being politically correct. They didn't link it again to the commercial piece they thought about, you know, the challenge was, 'Oh, it's just about political correctness'. And it just, I mean, we were pulling our hair out, (well, what little hair I have!). I was pulling it out at times with, with frustration at organisations. So it was challenging. But I think, because we entered the market, and we, you know, we shifted what was happening in a very static market around this conversation.

And I think fundamentally, that's what we did. 10 years ago, we shifted a discussion, and we shifted a focus towards action and rather, to action and commitment, rather than just like writing papers and charitable activity. So we did it with a sense of, you know, we're all in this together, we can all learn together. So let's go for it, and let's understand that not everything

might make the immediate change we want it to make, but we are going to down the line, create cultures that are truly inclusive, so it was fab.

**Stephanie** And with those challenges of trying to get people on board Rupert, was it difficult to kind of get employers on board right from the start?

**Rupert** It was certainly a challenge. So 10 years ago, the conversations and people's familiarity was around equality and diversity, of course, and inclusion was a new concept, and in fact, I, I always like to say that we invented it. I was probably pushing it slightly. But we were certainly there at the beginning, and we were certainly the first organisation in the UK to to be promoting inclusion in the workplace.

And I remember back in those days, right at the very beginning, I go out visiting organisations, and the first thing to do would be to explain what inclusion is, because we're all obviously webinars now, but if we used to have workshops held in the office, and people used to come in, and our earliest, the first topic we ever had for a workshop was 'What is Inclusion?'

So we had a number of early adopters, so people that really got it from the start. And people like Transport for London and Nomura, McDonald's, Hampshire Fire and Rescue and the Co-operative Group where some of the early organisations that joined us, and those ones are still members to this day, and they stuck with us, but clearly there are a lot of organisations for whom it was a new concept, but have come on board over the 10 years.

But right at the beginning, I'd say what we were having to do was to go and knock on doors. And, and be it was it was in effect in sales terms, it was cold calling it was say, 'Have you heard about inclusion'? And, you

know, nowadays, of course, there's, there's, thank goodness, there's a hunger and organisations are really, really want to learn all about it.

But I suppose you know, one of the things for us when we started, one of our USPs, was our offer, was a membership, which focused around inclusion. And for organisations at that time, what they were doing was they were joining numerous organisations looking at the different strands, or each of the protected characteristics at that time. And then there was memberships that specialised in each one. And this kind of pulled them together, but not only that, but created something more holistic than that, which was inclusion.

**Stephanie** And Claire, you know, when you look back over these last 10 years, a lot has happened. But if you were to pick just one highlight that springs to mind, which is a tough question, I'm guessing.

**Claire** Yeah, that's so hard Steph, that's so hard. I mean, in terms of, I suppose, if I think about it, in 10 years time, when I look back at Inclusive Employers, and what did we achieve in those first 10 years, and what was the highlight for me - yes, I could talk about amazing clients and amazing colleagues, and some really challenging and successful pieces of project work. But for me, it sort of feeds back into that point that Rupert made earlier about social justice, it's all about meaning.

So this is a very personal thing, I feel that we have achieved, and the highlight for me is a sense of achievement, around creating an understanding around inclusion. So people, inclusion is everywhere. We no longer have to explain what we mean by inclusion, and I think that's become part of, you know, society's understanding of the way workplaces should be, and I think we've played our part in that. And that for me, I know, it's a huge thing to say. It's not one specific thing. But for me, that is the highlight. And that will always be the highlight.

**Stephanie** Richard?

**Richard** Well, I'm just in awe of Claire's response, because I think that's totally it as well.

If I think about the core of who I am as a person, that is my highlight too. You know, we set out to disrupt, and actually create opportunity that will shift for everyone. It is deeply rooted in this sense of social justice as to who we are as people.

Claire also mentioned the amazing people that we've been lucky enough to work with, but I also think the highlight has been the fun. Like, it's been such hard work, and there have been times where we have had to fight tooth and nail to convince somebody, you know, years of writing business cases around why inclusion matters. And I think you're all thank goodness, we don't have to write all those business cases anymore. But the fun we've had and the laughs and, you know, I was laughing with somebody the other day about...

We did a big campaign a few years ago for Carers Week with Angela Rippon, and I remember Angela Rippon and I trotting around different different businesses to talk about kind of how we must be thinking about the role of carers in the workplace.

I remember one day, I think I was on about my fourth presentation of the day, and I had no idea what business I was in from one to the next, because I was like, literally on a mission and turning up to a huge organisation and completely standing on the stage in front of 400 people, and having no idea which organisation I'm in, and then actually saying to everyone, 'Welcome everyone to organisation X' when I'm actually stood in organisation Y?

So the highlight has been this sense of 'Look, we're human, we're all human' and that is that is what we need to celebrate. We are not creating a culture of automaton perfection. This is about being human, being real, and actually having fun with inclusion.

**Stephanie** And finally, Rupert, key highlights of the last 10 years, you talked about cold calling from the start to where you are now, how far you've come. If you were to pick a key highlight, what would that be?

**Rupert** I think it's the kind of super objective, which is to take the concept of inclusion and put it into reality.

We adopted a saying quite earlier on which was, action gets traction and papers get shredded...

**Stephanie** I like that.

**Rupert** This was our mantra. So we weren't here creating papers with things for people to read and pontificate over. What we were doing was coming up with real interventions, or actions you can take.

And what I've seen over the last 10 years is that been put into practice, and I think sort of linked to that the the, what's really exciting, for me, has been the development of the inclusive employee standard, which is really trying to define what an inclusive organisation looks like, and at the same time, give the practical opportunities to put that into practice. So actually, what can you do to become more inclusive, and that is kind of where we've kind of got to now.

**Stephanie** So now let's talk about the present and the current I&D priorities. We can't of course, ignore the last 12 months and the impact that's had on the

profile of inclusion, whether that's the impact of COVID and employees having to, like we are quickly adapt to working from home, often flexibly as well. Or, of course, the tragic murder of George Floyd, which raises the topic of racism and the existence of racist culture in some parts of society.

Claire, can you start by telling us about Inclusive Employers anti racism programme, and why you feel it's important for employers to engage with this topic?

**Claire**

Yeah, of course. I mean, we've spoken a lot, so far stuff about ideas and concepts. For us, all of our support, advice and guidance is rooted very much in being practical and making practical change, making real things happen.

So the work we're doing on anti racism currently reflects that. Obviously, we've been working, trying to challenge racism since we started Inclusive Employers, there's no question about that.

We've done some major programmes of work, but on the 25th of May, last year, George Floyd was murdered, and that had such a impact on employers across the UK and globally.

Sadly, George is just one name, and most of the names we know are men's names, but also lots of women have been murdered in the same sorts of circumstances.

And the sort of profoundness and the awfulness of that situation, resulted in lots of employers basically, going into a spin because they didn't know what to say, they didn't know how to say it, they were terrified of making a mistake. And as a consequence, they weren't doing anything.

So our message all through 2020 was very much around, scale yourself up, get aware, but basically start saying something, say it with some humility. Nobody expects us, you know us all to know all the answers. We don't. But it was a really, really strong message around 'just start talking about it. Just start thinking about it'. Demonstrate to your staff that you care.

I mean, we're doing loads of work at the moment, we've got a programme of activity that spans our birthday celebrations, that relates to anti racism, looking back the current situation and looking forward. But we've also got a huge benefit of them at the moment in that one of our members has allowed us to work with one of their staff full time for a year on developing a really comprehensive toolkit, which is all about creating anti racist workforces. comprehensive, practical, hopefully, it will help you it will give people the tools. So it's going to be far less common for people to say, but we don't know what to do, because we will have shown we will be providing the tools we already are but a much more comprehensive offering in terms of everything from very strategic issues, through to very day to day management decisions and team behaviours.

So there's an awful lot going on, and I mean, it's essential that employers engage with this topic, because it's just core to inclusion. It's like everything else that we've been spoken speaking about. You can't not, it's essential.

**Stephanie** Richard, I understand there's a lot of conversations about trans inclusion at Inclusive Employers, can you explain why this is, and tell us a little about what employers can do to support the trans community?

**Richard** I mentioned earlier on about in the early days of Inclusive Employers when, when people talked about LGB, or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and, and the Trans piece wasn't on the agenda.

I mean, I remember in very early days doing some sessions on trans awareness. And we worked with some great colleagues who helped us understand and partner with organisations who have great expertise, and then I think what happened on the agenda? Was it somehow it ticked along, but something shifted from it being a positive focus on trans inclusion, and societally, I think there has been this, we can see it in the press all the time about an increase in transphobia. Even just stories in the last few days, from Caitlyn Jenner, about trans women in sport, and you're thinking, this is not moving things forward, this is not creating a more trans inclusive culture.

So yes, I mean we've been really strongly driving change towards employers understanding trans, or you've been more trans aware, more trans inclusive, for quite some time, and over the last year or so it's been a big focus, thinking about things like allies.

I mean, we started off with a framework about four A's, Allyship, Advocacy, Awareness and Action. Because we needed to move it, from not just the conversation, and like we're all supporting each other in, but actually, we needed to move it to, how am I going to get my voice heard and say, actually, you know, I'm going to step in and say 'this isn't acceptable'. I'm going to look at kind of those workplace issues that actually are excluding our trans colleagues, and I'm going to step in, and I'm going to shift and change those.

So it's been a huge piece of work, and it's it's an ongoing piece of work, but I'm afraid it's a mountain that we have to climb together. There's a lot of work to do. There is fear and prejudice that I find appalling and abhorrent, and we need to keep going.

**Stephanie** What can employers do, I guess, really, to try and support that community?

**Richard** Well, I mean, I think they can start by going back to those four A's, they can start by very clearly demonstrating their commitment to being trans-inclusive, they can develop allies programme, so the programmes that many of our colleagues are running in organisations around ally ship.

And that might start with building awareness and kind of giving people some of the skills to have conversations and to ask questions, and not to make assumptions or judgments about people. Ask yourself that question, who is excluded by this decision, or who is excluded by this issue? And how can we do things differently to ensure that our trans and non binary colleagues are included in this conversation? It's about educating ourselves and others.

And I mean, as it's not just employers, but every one of us can use our voice, I think that there was an A which was amplify our voices, to amplify our voices to say actually, I am not going to be a bystander on this and let other people be excluded because of who they are. I'm going to step in.

**Stephanie** And acceptance as well, because acceptance is an emotion that we feel and you know, we choose to accept things, don't we?

**Richard** Yeah...

**Stephanie** ...and we should choose to accept people, whoever they are, from whatever, you know, wherever they're from in the world, whatever community they're from... just acceptance. It's not difficult, is it?

**Richard** Steph, I think that goes to the core of some of the stuff about starting Inclusive Employers, we used to do this thing, I mean, it's even pre

Inclusive Employers. When I was doing equality and diversity training, and I used to do this thing about the TAV spectrum, which is about tolerance, acceptance and value.

And with tolerance I mean, I remember in the early part of my career, people saying, “Oh, I'll tolerate gay people”. And I was like, “Hang on a minute, I don't mean, to be tolerated”. You know, baseline accepted,

**Stephanie** “Tolerate” is is such a negative word, isn't it?

**Richard** It's awful. But it was like, I can seriously remember in the early part of my career, people would say that, you know, I tolerate, you know, people from said, but I think you're six 'A', that is a really good, you know, moment of recognition that baseline is acceptance of all difference.

But the truth is, we need to get to that V, the value or those difference. And in order to get there, there are some steps. And certainly in trans inclusion, it is about valuing all of those differences, and valuing for people for who they are, who they truly are.

**Stephanie** Claire, at the start of this next part of the podcast, talking about the present and I&D priorities, COVID had a massive impact, of course, on lots of businesses in particular highlighting the need for flexible working. Do you think the changes that have been brought about by COVID will have a positive or I guess, negative long term effects on inclusion in the workplace? You know, there's there's mental health in there, there's disability, there's all sorts of things, isn't there?

**Claire** Yeah, absolutely. I think the first thing we need to say about COVID, Steph, is that it will be, it might be years, before we ever really know the answer to that question, I'm afraid. And we might never know.

And I'm also sort of mindful of, you know, we've got clients who've lost colleagues and staff members to COVID. So the impact is indescribable, in that context, but if we think about it from an employment perspective, I think there are positives and negatives.

I think that for years and the HR function, we talk about, you know, what is the future of work, and all of a sudden, March 2020, this is the future it's arrived, you know, we are now much more digitally orientated, people are working from home, working really flexibly, organisations that in a million years wouldn't have let their staff be home based now are and seeing that actually, productivity has gone up, people are happier, they've got a better work life balance. So there's so many real positives in the context of working patterns I think.

We definitely have colleagues, who have said to us for the first time as disabled people, they feel more equal than ever before. So it's smoothed out some of the differences in some way, if that's the right way to put it. I mean, not that you'd want to change differences, you know, value or difference picking up on the point we've just made, but for those individuals, it's actually they feel less excluded as a consequence of the way they've worked.

So yeah, positives and negatives, definitely real significant emphasis needed on mental health, it's mental health awareness week in May, we will be doing a lot of work around mental health, as many of our members and clients will be, but with a very specific focus. So it's much more around isolation, loss, connection, and those sorts of issues.

So I think real real impact is a consequence of COVID, but ultimately, we come back to this point that, you know, we're all different, everyone's different. So I always hesitate at when it comes to making generalisations about good and bad because ultimately, if you're going to be inclusive,

you're just thinking about the impact on the person in front of you. It's all about that individual, and understanding what the impact on there has been. So you know, if people are listening to the podcast and thinking, oh, there's some good stuff, there's some bad stuff, actually, you need to have the conversation and find out what's the impact for the individual not make those sorts of broad brush assumptions.

**Stephanie** It's something we say a lot, but it all starts with that conversation doesn't it?

**Claire** Yeah, it really does.

**Stephanie** Rupert, you're producing a white paper about inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

Now, the survey said that there is a positive change in the attitude and behaviour of employees, with 88% saying that this had improved due to I & D work in their organisation. Is that a number you expected, and I guess what else in the survey did it tell you about workplace inclusion that's happening right now?

**Rupert** It was wonderful to see that inclusion work is having that impact on respondents. And what's really interesting I think is, I mean, I'm now in my fourth decade in work, and I'm a bit older than that, obviously. So I've seen a lot of change over that time to when I entered the workplace back in the early 80s, and I think what's what's really great now is the impact that inclusion is having on the workplace as it becomes more embedded. And that that is what's been happening in the last 10 years, as well as the broader societal impacts of inclusion.

And even small things well what I might call small, but someone else will probably call massive things like today, hearing on the radio that for the

first time, women, mothers' names will be included on wedding certificates, and they say those kinds of things that you spent, I've spent the last 60 years of my life blind to, the fact that that doesn't, that's not there, and you get so used to living in society that it needs something to really nudge you on, and make things better.

So as I am pleased, I'm pleased we're having that impact. There's more work to be done, of course, and that's what he's becoming out in the white paper in other areas. But that's what we want to see, we want to see where the focus needs to be moving forward. There are still 13% of respondents were saying that inclusion activity is minimal within their organisation, but having said that, 49% have gotten an inclusion and diversity strategy now. And that's one of those sort of key stones that we need to have in place to make change in an organisation.

**Stephanie** And when Inclusive Employers started, what percentage had that in place?

**Richard** Well, none.

**Stephanie** None, exactly. So we've come a long way in those 10 years. And we Yeah, now you stand back and look at the work that you've done.

**Rupert** But you know, at the moment, another area that clearly will be a focus in the future is that only one in 10 line managers are saying that inclusion is a priority for them. So whilst inclusion is there, in a lot of cases, it's how embedded is it? And that's that's really, as we talked about the future one of the areas.

**Stephanie** Yeah, and as you say, there's there's still quite a bit of work to be done, which we've talked about the impacts of what's happening in society, of course, such as COVID, and George Floyd's murder, of course, but the

survey also told us that inclusion and diversity training can have a positive impact on people's mindsets or our behaviours outside of work. In fact, 96% of participants who are training said that it's had a really positive effect on them.

Richard, what are your thoughts on this? Is it something that you've seen happening over the years?

**Richard**

Oh, gosh, absolutely, and it's the, as somebody who's been doing a lot of learning and development programmes over many, many years, pre Inclusive Employers, it is those light bulb moments when somebody gets it that makes your job worthwhile.

And you see it you see, all of a sudden that somebody you know, somebody connects, and it makes sense to them. And I think that's what we all have the team here have been brilliant at doing. Making inclusion makes sense to individuals. They've made it resonate with people and so the lights go on, people get it. And it's obviously our super objective, really, from an Inclusive Employers perspective, is around creating that culture change within an organisation so everyone can prosper and everyone can, you know, be that be who they truly are, and commercial success.

But there is absolutely that element where it's, I mean, this is not the right phrasing in a COVID world, it's like, infecting people with enthusiasm for inclusion. It's saying to them 'you know, you can do this, you can play a role on this'. And so actually, if that if that becomes part of their DNA, that they are empowered to do it themselves. It isn't something that's been done to them, it's actually how 'they' can develop their awareness, how 'they' can actually understand the impact of their behaviours on people around them. And whether those that impact can be adjusted to be more inclusive, I mean, I think this is long live training, and you know, and

actually those moments to influence people and help them understand that actually, they can be part of the change.

It goes back to something we did very early on in terms of some of the immersive training that we've run over the years, and kind of the theory is, if you if you tell me, I'll forget. And if you involve me, I will remember, and I will do things differently. And that's really fundamental.

**Stephanie** Claire, what right now as we get ready to move on in the podcasts and look at the future, but right now, what conversations are you having with members at the moment? What types of work are the Inclusive Employers team focusing on and which do you think has the biggest impact on workplace inclusion?

**Claire** I think one thing about the way we work Steph, is that we meet employers where they are, wherever they are, is fine with us, we don't expect them all to be superstars or, you know, we're just work with them and support them from wherever they are.

So what that actually means is that we are always talking about a really broad range of services and types of support, so we've still got tonnes of activity and interest in our qualifications programme in membership, in training, consultancy, the sorts of things that are very much day to day.

I suppose, the key things are for us, if we drill down a level into what actual strands of work are getting a lot of attention. I think we've spoken about allies a lot today already, but for me, it is about that sense of we're all in this together.

One of the things that happened through 2020 was a lot of conversations, following the sort of activity around the Black Lives Matter movement, a lot of conversation about the changes not being on the shoulders of black

colleagues to make it's it's a shared responsibility. Everyone's got a duty to be active, not passive, not just say, I'm not a racist, but actually what are you going to do to support an anti racist culture.

So I think allyship is really critical, and it drills us down into literally day to day behaviours, giving people the self awareness and the skills to share that responsibility actively and make some change. So I'd say ally ships really important.

But I mean, I think everything from equality or inclusion impact, so again, how are you thinking about that decision, that plan, that new policy, that new building, how does that impact all these types of difference? So being structured and process driven around inclusion, as well as some of the things that Richard's referred to in terms of excitement, light bulb moments, fun. I mean, we started planning for National Inclusion week, as you would expect, and so that's all about fun engagement, doing a lot of exciting new fresh work, and pulling people into this agenda. So really, really broad, there is no one answer. We're talking about everything, as we always have, as we always will.

**Stephanie** Looking at the 10 years of Inclusion survey, that almost 100% expected it to create positive change in the next 10 years. I mean, I just mentioned earlier how far we've come in the last 10 years. Many talks about keeping up the momentum to ensure that the way we keep talking about inclusion, and pressing forward to really make a positive change. I mean, Rupert, what is your hope for workplace inclusion in the next decade?

**Rupert** For me, it really is about harnessing that momentum that they exist now. And it's a really precious thing. And I see, for organisations over the next 10 years, there's going to be some key demographic changes, which are going to stem from the work we're doing now.

So there'll be greater representation within organisations, which will lead to different thinking, and a more positive outcome for those organisations in a commercial sense. Those demographic changes are also about the workforce as well as a whole as more people enter the workforce with a different lived experience, to people like me who been there a long time, and that will have a significant difference in terms of the amount of intervention that's needed, but I think as well, it's about the organization's DNA. And it's really important that Inclusion becomes mainstreamed over the next 10 years, and that it's Is there throughout the organisation.

So those key touch points for employees during the the employment cycle, Inclusion is being considered, it's in the business plan for the organisation. And it's, it's filtered down, cascaded into the local departmental business plans into people's targets. And so so it's actually having an impact, and it's having a day to day impact. And it's not just an add on. So it needs those 49% of organisations with an I&D strategy to be up at 100%. It needs line managers, it needs 10 out of 10, to be considering inclusion as part of their line management practice. I could go on, it's that's my vision.

**Stephanie** Now, Claire, in the next decade, there's going to be a new generation of young people coming into the workforce, who are going to expect their employers and colleagues to be inclusive. Do you think this is going to pose new challenges for employers?

**Claire** I think the challenges are changing all the time, Steph, so a lot of what we talk about in terms of workplace inclusion is influenced by what's going on in society, how people consume their news, what they care about, all of those sorts of wider issues. So yes, it will pose new challenges, but I think it comes down to this very simple point around understanding difference and listening to the individual. So if Leaders, Managers, Hiring Managers, Recruiters are skilled and aware enough to be able to do that, then the

age demographic shouldn't be a problem, because they're actually engaging with the individual.

So yes, obviously, you need to be thinking about trends and issues in a more general way, I guess. But ultimately, I think, if you've got inclusion, right, then by definition, it works for everyone.

**Stephanie** And finally, talking about the future – Richard, how important do you see the role of senior leadership pushing inclusion, because it's got to be pushed from the top down hasn't it?

**Richard** Well, I mean, with the old theory, 'what gets measured gets done' - Absolutely. Steph, and picking up on Claire's point. You know, inclusion is about every single one of us.

I think there's work that we need to do with leaders. So I think, absolutely, we need leaders to sign off those strategies to actually make sure that they're setting clear inclusion objectives to those mid level managers. So it's kind of weaving through. But leaders also need to understand I mean, we part of our inclusive leadership programme is around liberating leaders to say that actually, they still have to be human, and they're not expected to know it all, and they can make mistakes... And actually, they're not meant to be a walking, talking encyclopaedia about all things equality, diversity and inclusion. So they are critical. But I think when you look at programmes like our Inclusive Sport programme, we're very much looking holistically about the footprint of every individual within an organisation.

So you've got programmes for inclusive leaders, which would be deliberated, leader programme, things for our, manager population, who are the enablers, the people that can actually unlock doors and create those connections, which are really key.

And going back to Rupert's point about those, if any, you know, what 10% of of mid level managers are currently thinking that they're doing that work, then we need to kind of really enable them to be the enablers. So that a lot of work there.

And then I suppose the key thing about leadership is that it's a two way street, you know, we can all lead this agenda as well, and with the Inclusive Sport programme, the third pillar is around Inclusion Influences, that every single one of us can get out there and make that change.

So leaders are critical. strategic direction is critical. But it needs to be understood embedded and, embraced by everyone in the organisation. It's not going to work if a leader just issues a dictate, saying and now we're going to be inclusive, they've got to live, breathe and own it.

And I think one final thing about this thing about leaders and going back to Claire's point, around this is up to everyone, is that 2021 Yeah, we're coming out of big global shifts. And if we do not start to pull together as humanity, this might be going back to my social justice agenda. But if we don't go back to this sense of being united as to being together, then actually we're not going to actually achieve the change that we can. And that's why I'm so pleased to see the work going on for National Inclusion Week this year around and the work around United for Inclusion. It isn't just leaders, it's all of us leaders are critical. They need to set that tone and set that direction. But actually, for the future, we've got to be United for Inclusion.

**Stephanie** Congratulations on celebrating your 10th anniversary. It's been a real honour to speak to you today. Thank you so much, Richard McKenna, Rupert Moynes and Claire Williams. Thank you so much.

To find out more about what we do here at Inclusive Employers, you can visit our website, which is [InclusiveEmployers.co.uk](https://www.InclusiveEmployers.co.uk).

Now on [our next podcast](#), we're going to be talking about anti racism with Sandy Sohal, and Baron Anyangwe. You'll hear about Sandy and Baron's personal experiences, as well as advice for employers on how you can build an anti racist culture within your organisation. It's not one to miss.