



NEWSLETTER

July 2026

Diversity
JOBS GROUP

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Welcome to the July 2026 edition

This month focuses on strategic progression and individual empowerment within the workplace.

In this issue, we look at how Sense is driving progress as they unveil their new Three-Year Strategy for change. We also share powerful stories of personal growth and resilience, highlighting HMRC's piece on building confidence with a non-visible disability, alongside the Royal Society of Chemistry's feature on Dr Rizwana Alvi's journey from abled to disabled then enabled. Finally, we mark International Non-Binary People's Day, emphasising the importance of fostering inclusive spaces where everyone can bring their authentic selves to work.

Inside this issue:

- Sense unveils their new Three-Year Strategy for change
- HMRC shares Tasha's story on Building Confidence with a Non-Visible Disability
- Royal Society of Chemistry shares Dr Rizwana Alvi's journey from abled to disabled then enabled
- International Non-Binary People's Day
- Welcome to our new partners from June
- Notable Dates

Sense Unveils new Three-Year plan to Break Down Barriers



Transforming Sense, Together

Sense has launched its ambitious three-year transformational plan spanning 2026 to 2029, outlining a commitment to working alongside disabled people with complex needs. Shaped by over 3,000 voices connected to Sense, the plan is about listening to disabled people with complex needs and building a future where everyone has the power, choice and control to live the life they choose.

Breaking Down Barriers Across the UK

Founded over 70 years ago by two determined mothers, Peggy Freeman and Margaret Brock, Sense has grown into a powerful movement of 3,000 employees and 2,000 volunteers. Operating across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the organisation delivers expert support in people's homes, their centres, colleges and services. Through campaigning and advocacy, they work alongside disabled people with complex needs to drive change towards a future where support works, systems join up and everyone belongs.

A Clear Vision for Lasting Change

With 1.6 million disabled people with complex needs in the UK currently facing daily barriers to living the life they choose, Sense is building a movement of changemakers to drive lasting change. Guided by a vision of "a world without limits for disabled people with complex needs," the organisation's new strategy focuses on creating a world where every disabled person with complex needs is in control, included and able to live the life they choose.

Sense's transformation plan

To deliver real impact over the next three years, Sense will be guided by four priorities:

Lead with lived experience:

Embed co-production into the heart of the way they work, ensure lived experience shapes decisions at every level, increase the number of disabled people working at Sense, and be the go-to organisation for co-production.

Strengthen services:

Expand support so Sense is there at every stage of life, digitalise systems to improve support and drive social change, grow support where demand is rising such as youth transitions and family support, and team up with brilliant partners to deliver programmes that support more people live full, connected lives for longer.

Drive social change:

Build a movement of changemakers, amplify the voices of disabled people with complex needs to shift power, secure radical policy change on the issues that matter most, use frontline insight to influence and improve practice, and challenge harmful attitudes through bold campaigns and partnerships

Invest in people, processes and systems:

Create more flexible, accessible ways to volunteer, strengthen fundraising, take climate action seriously, build an inclusive, values-driven culture that drives learning and accessibility, modernise systems and provide better tools to support their people.

To read their full three year plan, click [here](#)

Together, we're breaking down barriers alongside disabled people with complex needs.





HM Revenue
& Customs

Building Confidence with a Non-Visible Disability

Tasha's Story

At HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), inclusion is at the heart of who we are and how we work, and we are proud to have recently retained our Disability Confident Leader status.

Our Disability Network plays an integral role in championing accessibility by empowering colleagues, removing barriers, and promoting the Social Model of Disability across the organisation.

Open to all, it brings people together through allyship, awareness campaigns, and collaborative partnerships with HR, EDI teams and external experts.

Guided by dedicated national and regional leads, networks provide a voice for employees from underrepresented groups, raising awareness, fostering inclusion, and signposting people to support whilst acting as a critical friend to the organisation.

Tasha's story below brings this to life, sharing her experience of working with a non-visible disability at HMRC, the support she has received, and how she continues to grow in confidence and capability in her role.

Hey, I'm Tasha and I have several non-visible disabilities including autism spectrum disorder. I am a team leader in the Enforcement and Insolvency Services team based in Leeds, part of Debt Management within the Customer Services Group at HMRC.

I was never diagnosed with autism as a child; I was always described as an “old soul” growing up. I always kept to myself and was very academic – sticking to a near perfect cycle for a few months until the world got too much then everything unravelled. Later I learned this was autistic burnout. I naturally gravitated to a role that provided order and routine which is why I joined HMRC as a personal tax operational delivery professional apprentice back in 2022 in the Liverpool Regional Centre.

After a level transfer, I moved from Personal Tax to what was then Business Tax & Customs, relocating to another regional centre, then to Debt Management. From there, I was promoted into my current role, still within Debt Management.

I suppose you are probably thinking ‘that’s a lot of change?’ And yeah, you’re right, it is. But in my four years for working for HMRC it was the first move I chose to make, and during that time, my own health has declined. However, the support I received has been amazing.

The most daunting thing I have done so far in HMRC is step up as a disabled colleague – as someone with autism. I have often felt like I have put myself in a box of ‘I’m not good with people, I’m not a people person.’ Especially in social situations as they aren’t as easy for me as they would be for others. But I have found the barriers I have in place have been my own negative cognitions rather than my own ability to do the job.

I have a wonderful support structure from my managers, colleagues, and even the team of administrative officers I manage. As part of this, I have assistive technology to support me, which is a full licence to Microsoft Copilot. It is inbuilt to all my Microsoft Office applications including Teams and Outlook.

This allows me to draft Teams messages and emails and get real time feedback on how it sounds, and how it could be read and understood by other readers without me having to ask for another pair of eyes. It has helped me see the blind spot of understanding this from neurotypical reader's point of view. Genuinely, it's been helpful to use AI in such a way to help draft my words from something so direct, to something a bit softer to read.

I also have an eye condition which causes double vision and light sensitivity and HMRC has helped me through this so much. They have helped me secure a dedicated desk, specialist monitors, along with specialist software on my laptop so I can work like my peers.

Everyone's screens in the office look standard, and then there's mine, the complete opposite because I invert the colours. In Leeds, it's a sea of white screens... and then one stark black screen - but I guess it fits the aesthetic I choose to wear.

Inclusion is something we pride ourselves on here at HMRC and across the Civil Service. In my area, we run meetings with administrative officers and our senior leadership team to talk about any issues we may have, to make our area an amazing place to work.

We also recently celebrated joint Eid and Easter celebrations in our department. As a Scouser, I adore learning about different cultures from around the world, plus, any excuse to try different cuisines. One of our senior leaders said that food brings people together no matter what, and I think that is true – we all break bread, laugh and smile.

One of my biggest takeaways from joining HMRC is that no two days are the same –there's always something new to learn. I'd also say: don't assume the person you're speaking to fully understands your disability. In many cases, they won't, so it's important to be open and honest about what you need.

And if you happen to have an autistic manager like me, being clear and direct can really help!



As for me, I am already looking for my next adventure within the Civil Service, I have discovered a lot about myself in this role and hope to apply it to any future roles I may have.

To discover more about what it's like to work for HMRC, visit our page on Civil Service Careers.

[Click here to view](#)

Please note, the views presented in this article are a personal reflection and not HMRC's



Come and do work that matters — with people who care

We are the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) — a global community of over 60,000 members across 125 countries, and the professional body for chemists in the UK. Everything we do, from publishing cutting-edge research to supporting chemistry teachers in classrooms, is driven by one purpose: advancing excellence in the chemical sciences.

Behind that mission is a team of around 600 people, based across six countries, who bring it to life every day. And we're always looking for brilliant people to join them.

You don't have to be a scientist to belong here

People are often surprised to discover just how varied a career at the RSC can be. We're a science organisation but our team includes marketers, technologists, finance professionals, communicators, membership specialists, publishers, community outreach workers, and more. What unites everyone is a genuine connection to our mission. Whatever your background, if you care about making knowledge accessible and supporting a global scientific community, there's likely a place for you here.

A place where you can be yourself

Actively working to address in equality, diversity and inclusion is central to everything we do. Our organisational values; we're curious, we have integrity, we connect people, we care, and we're ambitious; guide that work. Living those values shapes how we hire, how we work, and how we treat each other.

Our ambition is for our workforce to truly reflect the breadth of society, where every person who joins us to feel respected, valued, connected to our values and supported to thrive.

Our culture is shaped by how we work together. This includes our Allies and Colleagues Together (ACT) networks — employee-led groups that bring colleagues together around shared experiences, and play a real role in shaping our culture. Our networks include LGBT+ Network, Neurodivergent Equality Network, Racial Equality Group, all of which are open to everyone.

We're a Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) and committed to making the RSC work for you.

If you're disabled, or have a long-term health condition, we want the process of applying and interviewing with us to be as straightforward and comfortable as possible. That means we're happy to make adjustments — and you don't need to have everything figured out before you ask. We'll have that conversation with you. At interview stage, that might be a remote interview, having questions shared in the chat box so you can read them as well as hear them, extra time, short breaks, or the option to bring notes. Whatever helps you show us what you can do.

And if you join us, the support doesn't stop there. We know that everyone works differently, and we'll work with you to make sure you have what you need — whether that's more structure around tasks, flexibility in your working pattern, a quieter environment, different ways of communicating in meetings, or tools to help with focus and organisation. There's no single template for this. It's about what works for you.

If you want to hear more about what we do, visit our website www.rsc.org or get in touch with our Recruitment Team at jobs@rsc.org.

A journey from abled to disabled then enabled:

A Personal and Organisational Perspective

Dr Rizwana Alvi is an Education Specialist at the Royal Society of Chemistry. Her role involves conducting research to support strategic direction and enable evidence-informed decision-making. She also leads and manages proof-of-concept and pilot projects, while building and maintaining strong partner relationships.

Beyond the Label

When talking about disability, it is often represented as one shared experience. In reality disability refers to a wide range of distinct and overlapping experiences. It may be visible or hidden, and can involve physical, cognitive, or psychological dimensions either in isolation or, more commonly, all three in varying combination.

Disability may be congenital, arise from illness or injury, or develop over time. Each person's experience is shaped by their circumstances, identity, and environment. It follows that there can be no one-size-fits-all approach to workplace support. Provision must be individualised.

Diagnosis and a tale of two Journeys

My journey began with a diagnosis of early-onset Parkinson's disease, following changes in mobility and dexterity that were starting to affect my work. I chose to share this with my employer, the Royal Society of Chemistry. I am fortunate to be part of a close-knit, supportive team that gave me the confidence to be open and honest.

I recognise, however, that this is not everyone's experience; for many, disclosure can feel like exposing a vulnerability that may be misunderstood or viewed as a limitation. I found myself on two parallel journeys. The first was personal: coming to terms with the reality of my diagnosis—its meaning, its impact, and how I would navigate an uncertain future.

The second was professional: understanding what it meant for my role, my performance, and my future at work. What would I need to continue contributing effectively? How could I remain a valued member of the organisation? This was a not journey I could have navigated without the commitment of my employer, supported by the understanding, commitment, compassion, and at times patience of managers, and my colleagues.

Navigating Uncertainty: "What Do You Need?"

One of the most challenging aspects of this experience has been answering a question that appears simple and well-intentioned: "What can we do to support you? What reasonable adjustments do you need?" In reality, it was far from straightforward. Parkinson's is complex and unpredictable, making it difficult to define long-term support needs.

At the point of diagnosis, I did not fully understand what the future would hold. How do you plan for needs that are still evolving, or articulate requirements when the implications of your condition are not yet fully understood—even when you may still be in denial? I found myself trying to respond while navigating significant uncertainty, attempting to map a way forward without a clear view of what lay ahead. Had the organisation not been flexible and willing to learn alongside me, I may not have been able to continue.

Support in Practice: Experience and Reflection

Throughout this process, the support from my immediate team and wider organisation has been invaluable. Their openness, willingness to listen, and flexibility has enabled finding a way forward to start to rebuild confidence and continue to see myself as an active and valued contributor. It has not all been plain sailing. There have been moments of vulnerability, and not every step has been straightforward—at times, neither I nor the organisation had the answers.

However, a shared commitment to working through challenges and adapting together has made a meaningful difference.

As my needs have evolved, my role has also been adapted to reflect those changes. I recognise that this level of flexibility is not something everyone experiences—it is, in many ways, a privilege. It has enabled me to continue contributing to remain engaged in meaningful work.

Organisational Practice: The Broader Perspective

While my personal experience has been a positive one, it has also prompted reflection on how disability support can vary more broadly. Despite the complexity of disability, some organisations rely on standardised processes that, while well-intended, may be shaped more by assumptions than by individual experience. Support can risk becoming procedural, focused on generic adjustments rather than personalised understanding. The contrast between supportive, flexible environments and more rigid approaches highlights the significance of organisational mindset and culture.

Occupational Health – enabling or limiting?

Occupational health can play a crucial role in bridging the gap between medical understanding and workplace practice. At its best; as I experienced; it supports both the individual and the organisation plan

structured and informed practical workplace adjustments that enable individuals to remain effective. When focused on enabling participation, it is a powerful tool; when centred primarily on assessment or “fitness for work,” it can feel limiting. Intent is critical; support should aim to enable contribution, not define constraints

Rethinking Disability in the Workplace

My story clearly demonstrates that disability itself is not the barrier. It is the workplace structures, assumptions, and systems around it that create limitations. Adopting an equitable and flexible approach through listening, adapting and working in partnership to empower, disabled employees like me to thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Supporting disabled employees is more than simply accommodation to meet obligations. It is about enablement. Looking beyond the disability to the person and understanding the lived experience presents an opportunity to strengthen the organisation, broaden the talent pool, and diversify perspectives enhancing outcomes.

Where next?

My experience exemplifies meaningful, supportive practice, and the difference it can make, emphasising the importance of ensuring that this approach is not the exception, but the standard. More so, disability is not static. It evolves over time. Support, therefore, must also be dynamic; shaped by ongoing dialogue and understanding.

Ultimately, the question is not simply whether support exists, but how it is experienced. When organisations genuinely listen, adapt, and work in partnership with disabled employees, disability is no longer a barrier to contribution. It becomes part of a broader, more inclusive understanding of capability, and potential. At some point, any one of us may find ourselves on the other side of the looking glass — the environments we create today shape the experiences we share tomorrow.

Celebrating Visibility, Authenticity and Inclusion

International Non-Binary People's Day - 14th July

Observed globally each year on July 14th, International Non-Binary People's Day provides an important opportunity to recognise, celebrate, and support individuals who do not fit within the traditional gender binary. Across the UK, organisations and communities use this day to raise awareness about the unique experiences of non-binary people and to reflect on how workplaces can become more inclusive and safe. This day places inclusion and fairness firmly in focus, encouraging employers to ensure that all individuals feel seen, respected, and valued for who they are.

Creating Inclusive Workplace Cultures

For employers, building a supportive environment for non-binary talent involves moving beyond standard practices and actively reviewing everyday workplace policies. Introducing gender-neutral language, offering clear options for pronouns, and updating documentation systems to look beyond binary options are practical ways organisations can remove unnecessary barriers. Employers are increasingly recognising that meaningful change requires sustained action, starting with recruitment processes that signal a genuine commitment to diversity and equal access to opportunity.

Driving Progress Across Organisations

When workplaces prioritize a culture of inclusion, they benefit from broader perspectives, stronger decision-making, and access to a wider

pool of diverse talent. Fostering equity and dignity for non-binary employees helps build environments where everyone has the opportunity to succeed and thrive in their careers. As organisations across the UK mark International Non-Binary People's Day, the focus remains on turning awareness into practical, everyday steps that ensure workplaces are welcoming, equitable, and empowering for all.

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Last months new and renewing partners include:



Kensington



Notable Dates

- Disability Pride Month
- 14th - International Non-Binary People's Day
- 15th - World Youth Skills Day
- 18th - Nelson Mandela International Day
- 18th July - 17th Aug - South Asian Heritage Month
- 25th - National Schizophrenia Awareness Day
- 28th - World Hepatitis Day
- 30th - International Day of Friendship

