



Case
study

**MyPlus
Recruiters'
Club**

MyPLUS⁺
REALISING NEW
POSSIBILITIES

MyPlus and Herbert Smith Freehills: encouraging disclosure

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Working with MyPlus for 13 years has had a significant impact on our ability to build our brand with students and attract diverse talent. Most importantly, the MyPlus team has empowered our recruitment teams to have the confidence when speaking directly with students to understand their needs and how best to support them.

**Mary Carpenter,
Head of Recruitment,
Herbert Smith Freehills**

MyPlus is working with MyPlus Recruiters' Club Platinum member Herbert Smith Freehills to build on their strong track record of diverse recruitment by encouraging greater disclosure – a vital step to creating a more inclusive work environment.

The client

Herbert Smith Freehills is one of the world's leading international law firms, with around 5000 employees based in 24 offices worldwide and headquarters in London and Sydney. Working across sectors from energy to technology, the company prides itself on enabling its people to be their unique selves,

and has set a goal of being the leading law firm for diversity and inclusion. Reflecting that commitment, the company recently co-founded the Legal Neurodiversity Network with the aim of sharing good practice and generating new ideas that will widen diversity and embrace inclusion.



11.5%

of graduate hires disclosed
a disability in 2022/23,
up from **1.4%** two
years previously



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It's very important for us to build that trust with students so they feel they can disclose to us. If we don't know, we can't help.

Rebecca Farr,
Graduate Recruitment Manager,
Herbert Smith Freehills

The challenge

Recognising that attracting a diverse pool of candidates is not enough by itself, Herbert Smith Freehills is focusing efforts on retention and enabling individuals to realise their potential by making sure they get the tailored support they need to thrive. Working on the principle that “If we don't know, we can't help”, they aim to encourage disclosure by creating an environment where candidates with disabilities feel safe to share personal information and understand the range of support available to them.

The solution

The partnership between MyPlus and Herbert Smith Freehills goes back 13 years. As Platinum members of the MyPlus Recruiters' Club, the company has access to our full range of support including consultancy, a calendar of disability employment training events, in-house tailored training, online and telephone helplines and disability confidence toolkits as well as advertising and recruiting via the MyPlus Students' Club website.

Part of our work with them has involved helping to develop profiles of colleagues with disabilities, including neurodiverse conditions, for use on the company website and in social media. These powerful and engaging first-person testimonies focus on strengths and opportunities, rather than limitations, painting a picture of a positive, supportive working environment.

Consultancy enables Recruiters' Club members to access targeted support and advice on the areas that matter most to them. Herbert Smith Freehills have used their MyPlus consulting days in various different ways over the years, including to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the recruitment process.

This helped them identify some points where they could be doing more to raise awareness of adjustments, and to reassure students as to how their information would be used. As part of

In brief: goals

- Boost retention and engagement
- Provide tailored support to each individual
- Raise awareness of the support available

the follow-up, we worked with them to develop an information sheet on disclosure and adjustments that could be used to back up messages being delivered in person and by phone.

Recognising that information can gain credibility when delivered by a third party, Herbert Smith Freehills has also used its consulting days to further drive home the message around disclosure by inviting MyPlus to present at an open day event for students with disabilities. We explained why disclosure matters, how the information can be used to provide more effective support, and tackled students' concerns directly in a lively Q&A session.

Bespoke in-house training is another highly effective way businesses can access support tailored to their specific disability goals. We have developed training for Herbert Smith Freehills' graduate and experienced hire recruitment teams on disability confidence, including how to support applicants through the recruitment process. We have also delivered sessions for partners and senior associates, designed to build understanding and empathy at the same time as developing their confidence to interview and interact with disabled candidates.



We don't expect our people to be or think the same. That's why fostering an inclusive culture where our people can be themselves, contribute their perspective and perform roles which are meaningful and aligned to our shared values is a core business priority.

**Justin D'Agostino, CEO
Herbert Smith Freehills**

In brief: the solution

- Creating role models to boost engagement
- Raising awareness of adjustments
- Bringing clarity around the disclosure process
- Building disability confidence at all levels

Key actions and results

Together, these initiatives as well as our ongoing work and long-standing collaboration with Herbert Smith Freehills are delivering excellent results. Changes to the recruitment process, sessions on disclosure and the real-life stories we helped to develop have proved an effective way of demonstrating the company's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace. Ongoing consultancy and targeted training help build awareness, and create a culture that embraces disability along with all other aspects of diversity.

The latest figures available (covering 2022/23) show that 11.5% of graduate hires disclosed that they have a disability or long-term health condition, or are neurodivergent. Compared with a figure of just 1.4% in 2020/21, this strongly points to

candidates feeling significantly more confident to disclose. That confidence is felt at Herbert Smith Freehills too, with colleagues across the company now feeling better equipped to talk about disability in the workplace – a vital step towards their ambition to lead the way in diversity and inclusion.



It's great to feel like we're not in this alone. Every candidate, every set of circumstances is unique. To know we can call on MyPlus at any time for their support is really crucial.

**Rebecca Farr,
Graduate Recruitment Manager,
Herbert Smith Freehills**

In brief: impact

- Better access to information on disclosure and adjustments
- Significant increase in % disclosing a disability
- More tailored support for individuals
- Greater disability confidence across the organisation

Find out more

MyPlus provides a range of services for disabled individuals and employers. The MyPlus Recruiters' Club offers businesses an expert membership forum to share and gain insights, build greater disability confidence and realise the possibilities of employing individuals with disabilities and long-term health conditions.

Find out more at www.myplusconsulting.com or email info@myplusconsulting.com