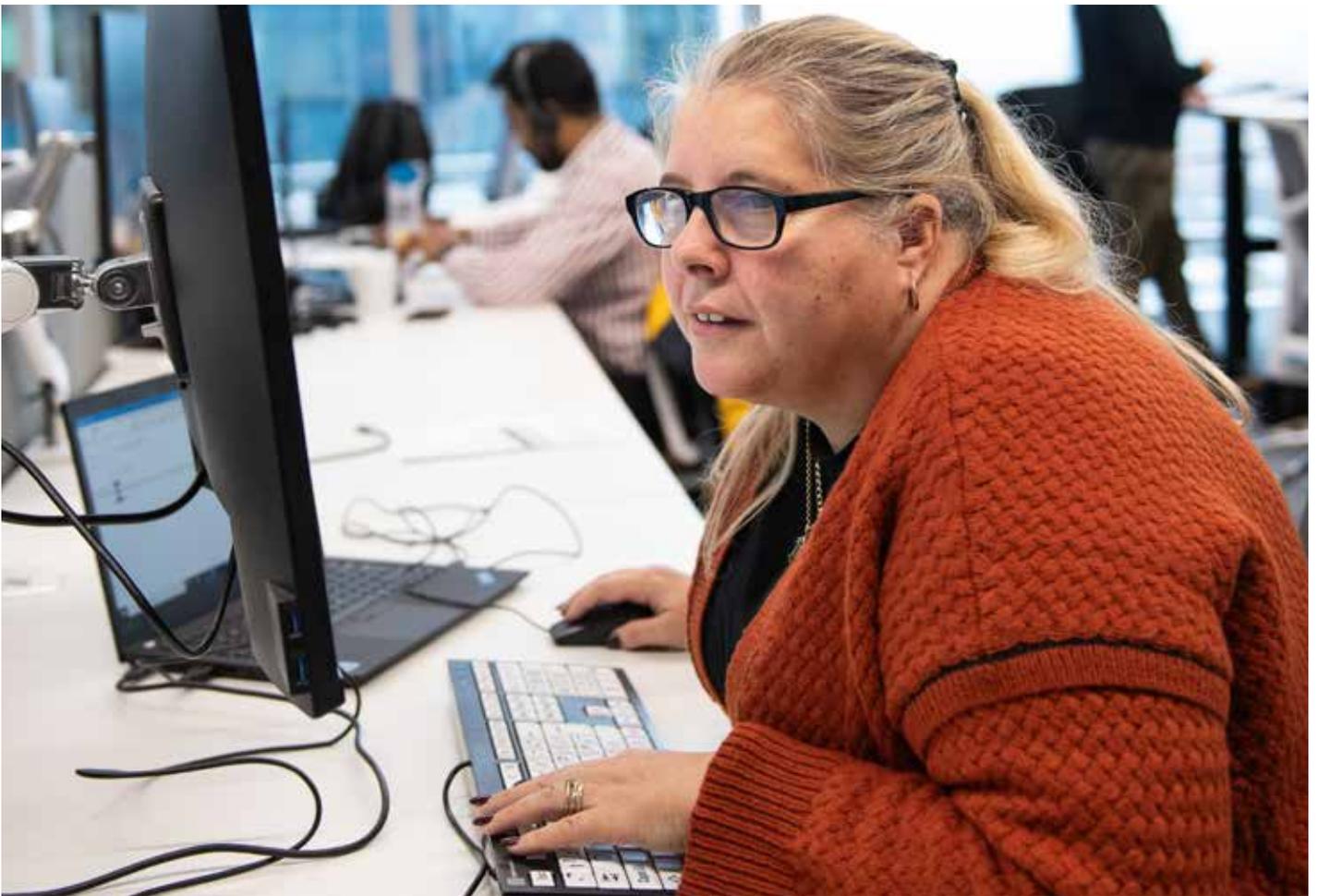


BT attains RNIB's Visibly Better Employer (VBE) quality standard

R N I B
Visibly Better

Employer

RNIB, the UK's leading sight loss charity, has awarded its VBE quality standard to BT showing how the telecommunications giant is a better, more inclusive employer, through removing any unnecessary barriers to the recruitment process and making workplace adjustments.



RNIB's team of employment specialists has enabled BT to improve its recruitment and retention practices for both new – and existing – staff with sight loss. RNIB considers accessibility of entire processes – from the initial advertisement, and application, to IT systems and workplace adjustments.

**Marie Clarkson, RNIB
Employment Manager, explains:**

“Only one in four people with sight loss of working age are employed and there are currently 11,000 people with sight loss in the UK actively seeking work. Many people also leave work unnecessarily each year due to sight

loss. By supporting employers like BT to reach the Visibly Better Employer (VBE) standard, we aim to increase the number of blind and partially sighted people applying for job opportunities and enable organisations to confidently retain staff who develop sight loss.

“BT embraced each element of the standard, paying particular attention to increasing employee knowledge of sight loss throughout the organisation. BT has invested in our eLearning module for employers – an online course helping people learn more about sight loss and the difference it can make to the working life of blind or partially sighted employees.”

BT supports partially sighted employees

Harriet Keeling has been working for BT for the last few years and has worked with RNIB to support its partially sighted employees. Harriet, age 50, was born with cataracts and then later developed nystagmus. Based in Exeter, she provides customers with support on mobile phones, broadband, landline and TV.

She says: “BT has been absolutely brilliant. Since speaking out about my needs, I’ve managed to communicate with the wider community of people



with sight loss within the company. So, I found other staff with sight loss doing similar roles to mine, to advise on ways of doing things. The training has now been adjusted so that it’s accessible for me – just a few little tweaks that I’ve needed, so that I can take part in training like everybody else.”

Helping partially sighted staff to develop their careers

Harriet is now on a development training scheme planning for management and a role as a team leader. She’s also applied for a place on the Aspire leadership programme which is recognised by a range of different businesses.

Harriet says: “I want to show other visually impaired people that it’s possible to achieve these things and move forward.

“I just want to make a good pathway for others, because BT is a massive global company – one that’s ready to employ partially sighted people – but we need to realise that we can apply and not be scared. Sometimes you need someone who is in there saying: “I’m visually impaired, I’ve done it.””

Charles Clement, DEI Manager at BT, comments: “Achieving the Visibly Better standard supports BT’s wider Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) strategy to continue working with staff with disabilities to maintain an inclusive work environment.”

If you’re an employer who would also like to access untapped talent, or support existing staff with sight loss, email our employment team: VisiblyBetterEmployer@rnib.org.uk