

Enabling and Embracing DE&I through Real Estate

CoreNet Global UK Chapter were back in action again last night, with a fantastic event around driving DE&I through Real Estate. The event kicked off at 5pm with tours of CBRE's newly opened Henrietta House building, showing our members some of the key wellness, sustainability, innovation, collaboration, and inclusive aspects of this newly designed flagship office.

The event then kicked off in earnest with a fantastic panel consisting of:

@Steve Ingham, Chief Executive Officer at PageGroup

@Gillian Burgis-Smith, Architect and Co-Founder & Managing Director of Inclusive Environments Limited

@Kate Smith, Executive Director, Head of Workplace & Portfolio Strategy UK, CBRE

And was moderated by **@Vanessa Curtis**, CoreNet Co-Chair of Communities and Chair of CBRE's Ability Network.

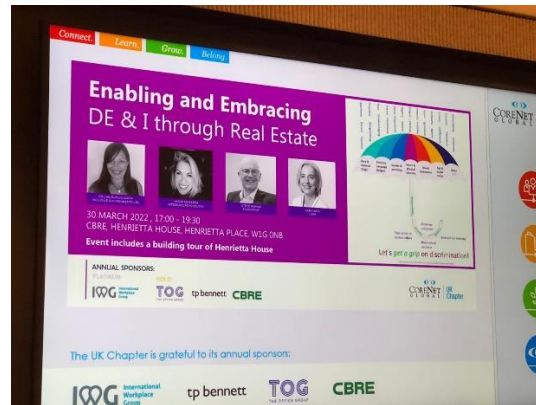
We discussed the drivers that are making DE&I such an important topic now – the great resignation, the demands of younger talent wanting to join companies whose values and ideals align with their, own, the fact that the talent shortages mean that 'social washing' no longer cuts the mustard.

@Steve Ingham, Chief Executive Officer at PageGroup, discussed the initiatives and ideals that helped PageGroup become a Disability Confident Leader accredited company) and which encourage and support DE&I globally. Steve also shared some personal insights around the impacts of spinal injury, and the challenges he faced coming back to work in a wheelchair.

@Gillian Burgis-Smith, Architect and Co-Founder & Managing Director of Inclusive Environments Limited talked openly about the impact of the brain tumour which caused her to see building design differently and how it motivated her to start her company Inclusive Environments. She also shared with us some of the amazing research she has been doing with Neurodiverse people and her findings on simple design considerations that can support those with Neurodiverse conditions to succeed in our workplaces.

@Kate Smith, Executive Director, Head of Workplace & Portfolio Strategy UK, CBRE spoke about the 'CRE DE&I Maturity Model' that we could use to understand where our organizations are now, as a way of evaluating how we can improve. Kate also talked passionately about workplace policies and procedures that can support DEI and about things that CBRE have done for women in the workplace, including free sanitary products and menopause support. She surprised us all with some simple ways we can design a 'menopause friendly office environment' – something many of our audience didn't know was possible!

Sadly, we were missing **@Naomi de Barra**, Chartered Psychologist, Co-founder and Director at Integrate Psychology on the evening due to Covid. But she did kindly record us a short video on Neurodiversity to share with our attendees.



It was a fantastic evening, at times moving, at times hilarious, but always informative. Key take aways from our panel were:

- Investigate the Hidden Disability Sunflower scheme and consider rolling out in your buildings and organisation+
- Drive your DE&I from the top down. Getting your most senior people to share insights around their own challenges, relating to mental health, or barriers they have faced in their lives can make it comfortable for people much down in the organisations to share their lived experience without fear of negative repercussions on career progression.
- Leverage the power of your DEI Networks or Employee Business Resource Groups. Data doesn't lie! Building that network will give you're a wealth of insight you can use to improve both your organisational policies and procedures but also your workplace design and ongoing facilities management. Get those conversations going!

And please remember the key phrase from the night **"Nothing about us, without us"**

CoreNet Global UK Chapter would like to take this opportunity to thank our fantastic panel speakers for giving their time to drive forward this vital conversation.