

# FAIRCHOICE

Keeping you up-to-date with diversity news, trends and tips

October-December 2022

Welcome to the Autumn edition of FairChoice

*"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength."* - Maya Angelou

Welcome to the autumn edition of FairChoice, our quarterly round up of diversity news. In this edition we are acknowledging and celebrating some key dates that are meaningful to our employees, learners and the employers we support.

GP Strategies, together with the IDEA Council, is a geographically diverse global organisation and the culture and traditions of our employees are unique to their location. We also recognize the need to be geographically inclusive and strive to continue to do our best to meet our diverse workforce's needs.

## OCTOBER - BLACK HISTORY MONTH

October is Black History Month in the UK and this year's theme is 'Sharing Journeys' – an exploration of the lives and stories of the people who came to Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries and helped laid the foundations of today's diverse Black British Community.

### **What are the origins of Black History Month in the UK?**

After visiting America in the 1970s, Akyaaba Sebo, a special projects coordinator of the Ethnic Minorities Unit, created a British version of Black History Month. He wanted to boost the self-esteem of Black British children and young adults by educating them on the long history and achievements of Black people living in the UK.

### **Why do we celebrate Black History Month?**

Following the anti-black racism protests that swept the globe in 2020, there was a step-change in how racism was addressed by individuals and organisations. Honest dialogues were opened over Britain's colonial past, and diversity and inclusion became a key component of corporate policy.

As our stories enter the mainstream and UK Black history is seen as just British history. It is important that the stories of our lesser-known Black Britons are not forgotten and that the authenticity of those stories is not lost, and are told in their own words.

Black History Month exists to tell these stories in our own voices. It's a chance to shine a light on individuals who aren't featured in the mainstream and whose contributions would be forgotten without Black History Month UK. It's a time to celebrate Black Britons who are making history.

## DIWALI - 22 - 26 OCTOBER

Diwali or Deepavali, also known as the "Festival of Lights," is a religious observance commemorated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and some Buddhists around the world. During the Hindu month of Kartik, of which the dates are determined according to the position of the moon, Diwali falls on the 15th day. This means the date varies but this year it takes place from October 22 to October 26.

Spiritually, Diwali symbolises the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.

As the term "Festival of Lights" suggests, the observance the celebration involves millions of lights illuminated from rooftops, doorways, and windows in thousands of temples and buildings and sees millions of people attend firework displays, prayer services and festive events in celebration of the occasion.

### Fun Fact:

Rangoli is a popular Diwali tradition - beautiful patterns made using colourful powders and flowers. People draw rangoli on the floor by the entrance of their homes to welcome the gods and bring good luck!



## DISABILITY HISTORY MONTH - 16 NOVEMBER - 16 DECEMBER

### Theme: Disability, Health and Well Being

Disability History Month is an annual event that provides a platform to focus on the history of disabled people's struggle for equality and human rights in the UK, and highlight the current inequalities and barriers disabled people face in society.

### Disability in the UK

**52.3%** of working age disabled people are in employment, compared to **81.7%** of working age non-disabled people



**Disabled people** from BAME backgrounds report **greater social inequalities** compared to disabled people from white backgrounds



**93%** of disabled people don't use a wheelchair



**83%** of disabled people acquire their health condition during working age



Globally 1 in 7 live with a disability. And of those, 80% are invisible.  
That is 1 billion people who are living with a non-visible disability.

## What is a disability?



A condition that effects an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.



A mental health or physical condition.



Disabilities can be visible or hidden.



Can last 12 months or longer and be recurring.

While some experience a disability that is visible, many have a non-visible impairment or condition. These non-visible disabilities, also known as invisible or hidden disabilities are not immediately obvious. They can be physical, mental or neurological and include, but are not limited to, autism and Asperger syndrome, cognitive impairments such as learning difficulties and dementia, as well as mental health conditions and speech, visual impairments or hearing loss.

### How can we possibly know if a person has a hidden disability?

Unless they say something, we usually can't, and unfortunately, this has led to many distressing and incorrect judgements based on appearance alone.

Just because a disability is not visible doesn't make it any less real, and that idea is slowly permeating throughout society. We are becoming more tolerant and understanding and workplaces are becoming much more inclusive, making a concerted effort to offer everyone the same opportunities. The more we talk about it, the more people become aware of the struggles people with disabilities (both visible and invisible) face every day.

### Final thoughts

At GP Strategies, we are committed to creating an environment where diversity is valued and encouraged for both our own employees and that of our learners. An environment that ensures equal access to opportunities for professional growth and advancement for all.

### Mental Health First Aiders

If you would like to talk to one of our Mental Health First Aiders, please contact us.

### Safeguarding

If you have any Safeguarding concerns please find more details on:  
<https://www.gpstl-apprenticeships.co.uk/safeguarding/>  
**We also have a 24/7 hotline: 0330 0183 531**



GP Strategies – committed to equality and valuing diversity

