



DANSKE BANK UK ANNOUNCES COMMITMENT TO BUSINESS DISABILITY INCLUSION IN A FIRST FOR NORTHERN IRELAND BUSINESS

- *Danske Bank UK becomes the first Northern Irish member of The Valuable 500, which aims to unlock the value of disabled people across the world*
- *The Valuable 500 is seeking 500 global businesses to commit to putting disability on their board agendas in 2019*
- *UK Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton calls out “smart employers” who are benefiting from the “untapped pool of talent” presented by disabled people*

Northern Ireland’s largest bank Danske Bank today announces that it has become the first business in Northern Ireland to commit to putting disability on its board agenda in 2019, as part of its membership of The Valuable 500.

The Valuable 500, launched at the World Economic Forum’s Annual Summit in Davos on the 24th January, strives to place disability inclusion at the top of business agendas by holding global business leaders accountable for disability inclusion in their businesses.

Danske Bank UK is the largest bank in Northern Ireland, operating 42 branches and three regional business centres. Its commitment to The Valuable 500 forms part of its mission to advance the work of its Disability Action Group.

Stephen Matchett, Chief Financial Officer at Danske Bank UK, said:

“Our ambition is to be an inclusive business and to do more to help create a more inclusive society when it comes to equality, diversity and inclusion. I believe passionately in the need for companies like ours to show leadership on disability inclusion. It benefits our workplace, our customers and our business and we can be a power for good when it comes to creating greater awareness across Northern Irish society”.

“We have committed to discuss disability inclusion at Board level and have set up a disability action group within the bank to actively promote inclusion around disabilities in the workplace.”

Danske Bank’s commitment comes as Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton MP last week stated that “Disabled people can bring a wealth of skills and talents to an organisation, and smart employers are making sure that they are not missing out on this untapped pool of talent”.

Launched by founder of #valuable Caroline Casey at DAVOS last month, The Valuable 500 marks the first time that DAVOS included disability on the main stage with the support of global business leaders, including former CEO of Unilever Paul Polman, Bloomberg Chairman Peter T Grauer and Procter & Gamble Group President, North America, Caroline Tastad.

The campaign seeks to tackle the trend for businesses to claim they are diverse, but exclude disability from their definition of diversity. Research by EY commissioned by #valuable has found disability is still woefully absent from the majority of board level discussions globally - with the majority (56%) of global senior executives rarely or never discussing disability on their leadership agendas.

Caroline Casey, founder of #valuable commented:



“For Danske Bank UK to be the first Northern Irish company to sign up to The Valuable 500 is a true milestone. Employing around 1,400 staff, it is a key business in placing disability inclusion at the forefront of the global business scene, so we could not be happier to have them on board.

“It is amazing to see Danske Bank being a true leader in this space, and we hope it encourages further Northern Irish companies, and companies in the banking sector, to sign up. With the support of companies like Danske, we can continue the inclusion revolution we are seeing take place today, and can unleash the potential of the 1.3 billion disabled people across the globe.”

The campaign has yielded extraordinary interest since launching at the beginning of the year, with several companies already signed up. The first six global businesses to become members were **Unilever, Microsoft, Barclays, Fujitsu, Cinépolis, and Accenture.**

These companies and leaders are taking a number of steps to support disability inclusion and equality throughout their businesses – reflecting a groundswell of corporate appetite to actively drive action on disability inclusion in business.

Research from Edelman’s 2019 Trust Barometer found that 62% of employees are looking to their CEO for leadership during challenging times, and that “in 2019, trusted brands will be those who not only talk about change, but actively participate in driving it forward. The time for fence-sitting by large corporates is long gone – businesses must take a clear stance on issues and lead from the front.”

In March, Caroline Casey will take to the stage at SXSW in Austin, Texas and Advertising Week Europe in London to speak about The Valuable 500. Both events will include a screening of #valuable’s [DIVERSISH film](#), a satirical look at businesses that call themselves diverse, but overlook, ignore or postpone anything to do with disability. The film calls for business leaders to stop being *diversish* and commit to action on disability inclusion.

#valuable, the organisation behind the launch of The Valuable 500, is supported by a number of high profile businesses and business leaders, including strategic partners Omnicom and Virgin Media, and leaders including Sir Richard Branson, Paul Polman, Janet Riccio and EY Chairman & CEO Mark Weinberger.

Today, over one billion people across the world live with some form of disability - 15% of the global population, or 1 in 7 people - but their value is routinely ignored by business, equivalent to disregarding a potential market the size of US, Brazil, Indonesia and Pakistan combined.

The current global employment rate for disabled people is half that of non-disabled people, a gap that has widened since 2010. According to the World Health Organisation, up to half of businesses in OECD countries choose to pay fines rather than meet quotas on disability.

Along with their friends, families and communities, the one billion disabled people worldwide also hold a disposable annual income of \$8 trillion a year, equating to an opportunity that business cannot afford to ignore. Of those one billion, 80% of disabilities are acquired later life, and our ageing global population means the prevalence of disability is on the rise.



#valuable is a catalyst for an inclusion revolution that exists to position disability equally on the global business leadership agenda. It is spearheaded by award-winning activist, social entrepreneur and Binc founder Caroline Casey, who is registered blind.

In 2017, Caroline launched #valuable at One Young World, the global summit for young leaders, providing a platform to activate a new generation of future leaders who care passionately about disability inclusion and aren't afraid to be vocal about it.

Caroline set off on a boundary-pushing, month-long 1,000-kilometre horse adventure through Colombia to the opening ceremony of One Young World to engage next generation leaders with the power to make change.

Caroline took to the One Young World stage once more in 2018, speaking about the *Inclusion Revolution*.

To apply to be a Valuable 500 business, please visit thevaluable500.com.

#valuable – it's everyone's business.

- Ends -

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Applying for Membership of The Valuable 500

To apply to be a Valuable 500 business, please visit thevaluable500.com.

Membership of The Valuable 500 includes:

- Unlimited access to our executive disability performance resource hub
- Membership to a community of like-minded business peer leaders, committed to raising their game on disability
- The platform and opportunity to raise your profile as an early adopter helping to shape this vital emerging economic and societal agenda.

By becoming a member of The Valuable 500, you agree to:

- COMMIT: Table disability on your board agenda from 2019
- ACT: Make ONE firm commitment to action in 2019
- AMPLIFY: Share your commitment to The Valuable 500 internally and externally



About #valuable

Launched by Binc, #valuable is a campaign working to ensure businesses globally recognise the value of the one billion people around the world living with a disability. We believe that building a global society that recognises the value of the 1 billion people living with a disability starts with business. We're on a mission to make sure businesses across the world recognise the value of the one billion people living with a disability.

Binc was founded by social entrepreneur and activist Caroline Casey in 2015, with a mission to ignite a historic global movement for a new age of business inclusion. Binc is capitalising on Caroline Casey's 18-year track record of success engaging over 450 organisations and working with 500,000 business leaders. Binc fundamentally believes that inclusive business creates inclusive societies and is initiating a new approach to business that genuinely includes the 1 billion people living in the world with a disability. Binc is the founding team behind valuable, an ambitious global campaign to put inclusivity on top of the business agenda around the world in 2019. Binc is using a tried and tested formula that has worked in the past for gender, race and LGBT to leverage the exponential rise of The Diversity and Inclusion Agenda.

Definition of disability:

#valuable uses the definition provided by the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with disabilities, which defines a person living with a disability as 'those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'

¹ http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/chapter8.pdf

² WHO

³ http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/chapter8.pdf

⁴ Return on Disability, 2016

⁵ Scope and Landman, Enabling Work

– https://www.scope.org.uk/Scope/media/Images/Publication%20Directory/Landman_Report.PDF?ext=.pdf

Disability and the Sustainable Development Goals

The need to advance disability inclusion around the globe is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Disability or 'persons with disabilities' are specifically referenced 11 times in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a further six references to 'persons in vulnerable situations'. Principally with reference to: promoting inclusive economic growth that allows disabled people to fully access the job market and guaranteeing equal and accessible education through the creation of inclusive environments.