# Purple Pioneer

## Outline what your nominee has done to champion disability equality over the past 12 months, highlighting any key achievements.

Jo has been championing equality for disabled people in Manchester for almost five years. Some of their key achievements include:

* working with local authorities to deliver disability equality training in schools and workplaces.
* working with LGBTQIA+ organisations to create more accessible and inclusive pride events.
* establishing a network for Autistic adults in Manchester.
* organising and facilitating workshops and support groups for the local disabled community.

## Impact: how has your nominee created a marked positive effect or influence on the lives of disabled people?

Jo’s work has had a clear and lasting impact on the disabled community in Manchester and beyond.

Through their work with local authorities, Jo has delivered disability equality training in over 45 schools and workplaces in Manchester and the North West. In a feedback survey, one participant said ‘the session has really helped me to understand the needs of my neurodiverse students. I now feel better equipped to support them in the classroom’.

Jo has also worked with multiple LGBTQIA+ organisations to make their events more accessible for disabled people. Manchester Pride has made changes to their physical access provision based on Jo’s recommendations. This resulted in a 20% increase in attendance of wheelchair users at the event.

Jo established a network for Autistic adults in Manchester in 2019. Since then, the network has grown to over 75 members who regularly meet for support groups, workshops and events. One network member said ‘it’s great to be part of a community who understand your experiences and can offer tailored support’.

Jo has also supported network members and colleagues by referring them to tailored support services in times of crisis.

## Creativity: how has your nominee generated new or novel solutions to problems, created new connections or original ideas?

In collaboration with local authorities, Jo has developed a new disability equality training course which is rooted in lived experience. This replaces an outdated training model which had not been co-produced with disabled people. Jo also integrated a greater focus on neurodiversity and invisible disabilities into the training. This has been very well received, with one survey participant commenting ‘the training was really eye opening and helped me realise how I might not have been sensitive to invisible disabilities in the past’.

Jo’s work with Manchester Pride was prompted by their own experience of poor accessibility as an attendee. After getting in touch with their recommendations, they were invited in as a co-producer to improve the accessibility of the event. The guidelines that Jo helped to create have since been shared among other regional Pride events. They have demonstrated how important it is to be proactive and creative in meeting the needs of disabled people.

Jo recognised a need for a network for Autistic adults in Manchester. Existing networks included those for parents and carers, as well as online, nationwide groups. Jo’s network is the first of its kind in Manchester with its adult and local focus. The group’s size and high level of engagement highlights Jo’s understanding of the community and success in creatively solving problems.

## Diversity and Inclusion: how has your nominee shown they are committed to highlighting the voices of all disabled people? Has their approach considered supporting disabled people that face other forms of discrimination in society? For example disabled people from Black, Asian, minority ethnic, LGBTQ+, and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Jo’s work shows a great commitment to supporting disabled people from diverse communities and backgrounds. A great example is the work they have done to support Manchester Pride and other LGBTQ+ organisations. Jo identified that disabled people may not be able to attend Manchester Pride because of accessibility issues. Supporting improvements to accessibility at Manchester Pride and other LGBTQ+ events has had a tangible impact. It has supported LGBTQ+ disabled people and disabled allies to engage in important events such as Pride.

Jo’s work in creating a network for Autistic people has also been shaped by an approach that supports reaching diverse communities. When setting up the network, Jo proactively engaged with Black, Asian and minority ethnic community groups to encourage participation of Autistic adults from these communities in the group. Jo also secured funding to cover transport costs for people who needed it to attend sessions to ensure that finances were not a barrier to accessing the network.

These examples showcase the importance of diversity and inclusion in Jo’s initiatives, recognising the diversity of disabled people and ensuring that they are inclusive to all.

# Marketing Campaign

## Outline what your nominee has done to champion disability equality over the past 12 months, highlighting any key achievements.

To coincide with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in 2022, Apple launched The Greatest, a short film showcasing the brand’s ongoing commitment to accessibility.   
   
The Greatest shifts the dial when it comes to representing disabled people. The film follows the journey of seven people as they go about their lives, expressing their creativity, and shows how Apple’s accessibility features help them navigate their way through the world.

## Impact: how has your nominee created a marked positive effect or influence on the lives of disabled people?

As well as showcasing Apple’s wide range of accessibility features. The Greatest was designed to be an authentic depiction of the cast members based on their lived experiences. As such, the cast were heavily involved in the creative process, sharing their personal experiences to ensure a faithful representation of their world. In this way Apple has set the bar for other companies to create more diverse, inclusive and representative campaigns.

Disability rights activist Keely Cat-Wells wrote ‘“The Greatest” immediately resonated with me, as it not only showcases the company’s innovative accessibility features but also highlights the stories of an all-disabled cast, representing the authentic experiences of disabled individuals throughout what is not much more than an average day for each of them.’

## Creativity: how has your nominee generated new or novel solutions to problems, created new connections or original ideas?

The Greatest follows the lives of seven individuals as they engage in various activities, showcasing how Apple's suite of accessibility features enables them to navigate a world that wasn't designed with their needs in mind.

Everyone shown in the film is going about their daily lives, and creative techniques are used to create a sense of excitement about the accessibility features without ever veering into portraying its disabled subjects as ‘inspirational’ simply for existing.

To enhance the film’s creative impact, Apple incorporated a powerful soundtrack featuring remixed words from the legendary Muhammad Ali. The disabled cast members themselves, including Cola Boyy, a talented DJ/producer, and Matthew Whitaker, an acclaimed jazz pianist, performed this exclusive score.

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Throughout the production of “The Greatest,” Apple prioritized diversity and inclusivity by assembling a crew that included disabled people. This commitment to representation extended behind the camera, ensuring that the film captured the spirit of the community it aimed to empower.

As well as highlighting the talent and skill of disabled people, the cast of the advert sought to reflects the diversity of the disabled community. It shares the important message that disabled people are not a homogenous group.

## Co-production: how has your nominee collaborated or co-produced their work with disabled people?

Sarah Herrlinger, Apple’s Senior Director of Global Accessibility Policy and Initiatives, explains that this approach — whether it’s to products, services, or advertisements — is nothing new. "Since the beginning, Apple has been focused on making products and experiences for everyone — and that includes the stories we tell. Accessibility has a real impact on peoples' lives, and we work in deep collaboration with disability communities to ensure that our products work for a diverse set of users."

The casting process ensured the narratives depicted in the film genuinely reflect the experiences of the cast members. From an influencer to a model, a prodigious pianist to a veterinarian, a high school student to a mother, and a music producer, the diverse range of talents and personalities represented in the film helped shape an authentic portrayal of their stories.

In these ways, Apple has utilised co-production to enhance the creative impact of the ad and have demonstrated how including disabled people at every stage of the creative process can only serve to benefit such projects.

## Reach: how has your nominee reached a wide audience or raised public awareness of disability equality?

After just one week, the film had been viewed 16 million times, including 181,000 views of the audio-described version. As one of the most recognised brands in the world, Apple’s inclusive and authentic depiction of people with disabilities has reached huge disabled and non-disabled audiences across the world.