

Accessibility at Fort Kinnaird: Driving Greater Disability Inclusion and Accessibility, Seen and Unseen

Making spaces more accessible, supportive, and productive



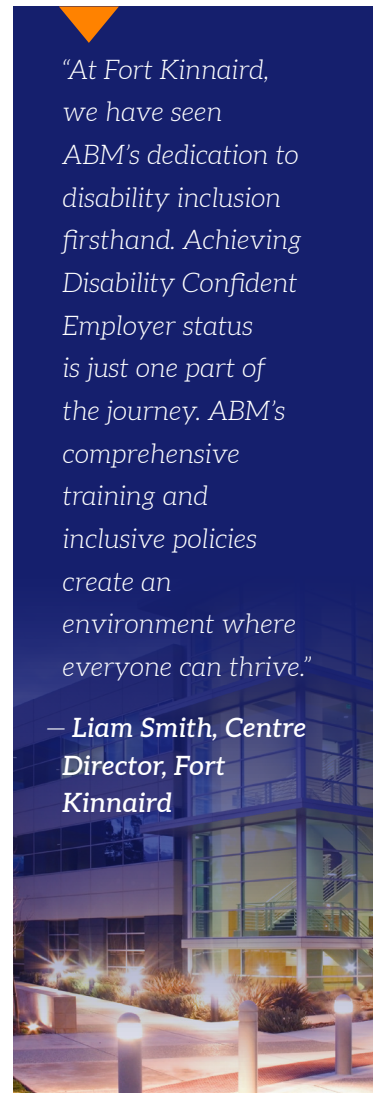
Fort Kinnaird, Edinburgh’s leading retail park, has partnered with ABM to drive significant improvements in accessibility and disability inclusion—addressing both visible and hidden needs across its operations. Sarah Robinson, Dual Services Manager for ABM, and her team have been pivotal in driving these new initiatives across Fort Kinnaird.

CHALLENGE

ABM identified that several staff members, including frontline and management, were living with disabilities, often without adequate support. Recognising this, ABM’s leadership saw an opportunity to enhance workplace inclusivity through targeted training, awareness, and community engagement. These efforts aimed not only to support employees but also to raise the overall standard of accessibility for customers and visitors. This included several frontline staff and site managers, many of whom had been working without any kind of accommodation.

“At Fort Kinnaird, we have seen ABM’s dedication to disability inclusion firsthand. Achieving Disability Confident Employer status is just one part of the journey. ABM’s comprehensive training and inclusive policies create an environment where everyone can thrive.”

— **Liam Smith, Centre Director, Fort Kinnaird**



In response to this, ABM's management team saw an opportunity to enhance the level of support they could deliver through training, awareness, and community engagement. This was critical in ensuring that team members received the help they needed during their shifts. Similarly, these changes enhanced the client's wider operation at Fort Kinnaird by increasing the overall standard of accessibility.

Moreover, this project had wider implications for accessibility and training programmes across ABM UK&I, with the possibility of expanding the kind of training team members received across the wider company portfolio.

SOLUTION

ABM's team at Fort Kinnaird introduced a range of projects and initiatives aimed at supporting staff members and the client's customers. This included a series of different actions, such as attaining industry accreditations, training, and direct support for team members who were themselves in need of assistance.

As changes to staff training were being implemented, another focus, wellbeing and mental health, was introduced. Central to ABM's mental wellbeing work was the 'My Whole Self' assessment, which was part of Mental Health First Aid England's wider 'My Whole Self' campaign. This initiative was designed to facilitate open and honest conversations between managers and their teams, so that staff had a means to express concerns.

The 'My Whole Self' assessment was carried out among ABM's team at Fort Kinnaird, which became vital in designing a series of actions for the general wellbeing of frontline teams. Initially, these changes started on a smaller scale, so that they could evaluate and highlight the positive effects they made. As a result, this process facilitated larger, more strategic changes.

For example, team managers set aside 10 minutes every day during breaks to give staff a chance to discuss concerns. Additionally, transcription pens were introduced for faster notetaking, as was yellow paper for people with dyslexia (specifically for Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome) to improve legibility.

Furthermore, ABM worked with a range of charitable organisations to develop additional skills for onsite teams, ensuring that staff were able to better support members of the public. This included the Royal Blind School, which trained them in proper guiding skills to assist people in need. Similarly, ABM's work with Deaf Action taught team members key British Sign Language (BSL) phrases. As a result, the client's operation was equipped to support members of the public with greater understanding and knowledge of increasingly common disabilities.



WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

The ABM team at Fort Kinnaird also took steps to engage with the community as a way to provide local people with increased accessibility pathways.

A core aspect of community engagement for the ABM team was its work with 'I Am Me' (IAM). IAM is a community charity that works in partnership with Police Scotland to raise awareness of, and tackle, disability-based hate crime. Moreover, the ABM team created a 'Keep Safe' place onsite. These spaces provided people with a location in which to seek assistance if they felt unsafe or had been the victim of a crime.

ABM training was then also given to staff members to support people with autism, both for members of the public and internal team members could recognise and support those with autism.

ABM then began working with Voice of Carers Across Lothian (VOCAL) to support team members who were also carers at home. As a result, team leaders received training from the charity, through which they could refer other team members for training and support.

The ABM team, in collaboration with local job centres, then worked to equip people with interview and work skills, including interview adaptation so that people received reasonable accommodations. Additionally, ABM's management team partnered with Skills Development Scotland, so that the onsite management team could help people with disabilities to secure employment.

PROJECTS FOR 2026

To build on existing accomplishments of the previous year, multiple projects were planned for 2026. This included additional training and accreditation, such as working toward the Autism Friendly certification, both for Fort Kinnaird itself and staff members. This demonstrated the retail park's status as an environment capable of supporting those with autism, both in its facilities and staff training.

Similarly, the team have planned to undergo additional 'I Am Me' training to take advantage of the skills on offer, both to enhance team wellbeing and facilitate an increasingly accessible environment.



BENEFITS

- **Expanded range of accreditations.** The ABM team at Fort Kinnaird has been working toward a range of industry accreditations with the aim of better supporting those with seen and unseen disabilities, such as Autism Friendly.
- **Increased accessibility training.** The client's operation has become more accessible and inclusive due to increased training for site teams. Staff members were well-positioned to help customers and team members alike with their respective disabilities.
- **Specialist sign language training.** ABM's work with Deaf Action trained team members in key British Sign Language (BSL) phrases, ensuring a greater degree of understanding, knowledge, and practical skill that could be utilised during shifts.
- **Future-proofing accessibility and inclusivity practices.** From team training such as the 'My Whole Self' assessment and turning Fort Kinnaird into a 'Keep Safe' space for people in need, the client's operation has become better prepared to deliver support to customers and the wider community.
- **Community engagement.** The ABM team took significant steps to engage with many different areas of the local community, including local police departments, charities, and schools, both to build ties and develop the onsite team's capabilities.
- **Autism Friendly accreditation.** The ABM team has been working with the client to attain an industry accreditation from Autism Friendly, which would demonstrate the team's ability to deliver a programme of support and inclusivity.



ABM enhanced Fort Kinnaird's retail spaces with greater inclusivity and accessibility practises
Find out how we can make it possible for you by visiting [ABM.co.uk](https://www.abm.co.uk).