



Your space to become  
a Sunflower Partner

Support those living with non-visible disabilities





## 2.2 billion people

globally are estimated to have a near or distance vision impairment

## Around 50 million people

worldwide have epilepsy. It is one of the most common neurological diseases globally



## Up to 2.5 billion people globally

are projected to have some degree of hearing loss by 2050



**approx 13% of people** with a disability require a wheelchair

Globally

# 1 billion

people experience some form of disability

## 80% of disabilities

are acquired between the ages of 16 and 64

## About one in 160 children

is on the autism spectrum

## 264 million people

are estimated to be affected by depression

## Roughly 10% (190 million)

of reproductive age women and girls globally experience endometriosis

# Make the invisible visible

Globally, 1 in 7 of us live with some form of disability. That's more than 1 billion disabled people in the world.

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. They also include respiratory and chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, chronic pain and sleep disorders when these significantly impact day-to-day life.

And often, many people experience a combination of both visible and non-visible impairments and conditions.

**Just because you can't see it,  
doesn't mean that it is not there**





“ I wear the Sunflower to be empowered, it makes me feel visible in any time I might need to be,”

# Become a Sunflower Partner

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Partner in your region.

## Why are we looking for Sunflower Partners?

Our aim is to increase awareness of the Sunflower globally to provide a consistent level of support for those who choose to wear it so they can be discreetly identified wherever they may travel, work, shop or be entertained safe in the knowledge that understanding, care or simply more time will be given.

So we are making the Sunflower available locally in an increasing number of countries around the world. We believe that we can achieve this through partnering with an organisation or business with regional knowledge who believes that improving support for those living with non-visible disabilities is a critical objective.

## Who are we looking for?

Our ideal Sunflower Partner has plenty of enthusiasm and a passion to support those living with non-visible disabilities. It is a charity, not for profit or awareness organisation with a strong commercial acumen and a desire to grow a sustainable and successful business. The Sunflower Partner will benefit from being associated with the Sunflower brand and have the opportunity to create additional fundraising income. We are also interested in privately-owned businesses that have a deep connection with the disability community.

Discover what it means to become a Sunflower Partner over the next few pages:

- The Sunflower space
- Why become a Sunflower Partner?
- The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower
- Our Sunflower products
- What are the next steps?



# The Sunflower space

Sunflower wearers are often the catalyst to encourage a business to expand their equality, diversity and inclusion objectives to include non-visible disabilities and join the Sunflower. For example, when the Sunflower is launched on one particular airline, Sunflower wearers will base their travel decision to include that airline so they are confident that they'll be given the assistance they need as they travel.

We have created a Sunflower space that allows our Sunflower community to come together and connect.



## Sunflower wearers

this is where they discover where they can shop, work, travel or be entertained with the Sunflower by their side. It is also a space to be heard and a space to listen through Sunflower Conversations and Stories, articles and an invisible disabilities index.

# Your Sunflower space



## Sunflower members

This is a space for organisations that have joined to stand out. A space to bring their business to life and to demonstrate how accessible they are. A space to tell their story and reveal their events to our Sunflower wearers.

## Sunflower membership

Organisations that join need to choose a Sunflower Membership plan to connect more closely with our Sunflower wearers and to get deeper insights into the Sunflower and non-visible disabilities.

There are four levels of Sunflower membership: Basic, Standard, Professional and Corporate with the option to pay monthly or annually.

At its most basic, organisations simply commit to train your colleagues to recognise the Sunflower and support those who chose to wear it. They can choose to purchase Sunflower products to provide to their colleagues or customers for free and add their location to the Sunflower map to be discovered by our Sunflower wearers as they plan their days out.

Find out more about the Sunflower membership plans on our website:  
[www.hiddendisabilitesstore.com](http://www.hiddendisabilitesstore.com)

## Advantages of the Sunflower space

### For Sunflower wearers

This is a space for our Sunflower wearers to plan days out to shop, work, travel or be entertained with the Sunflower by their side. They can search for places and find events that support people with non-visible disabilities.

#### Inform and be informed

This is a space for our Sunflower wearers to share their stories and listen to our Sunflower wearers sharing their individual moments and experiences. Explore topical, regional and sector-based articles and videos on our website.

Watch and listen to the Sunflower Stories and podcasts where our Sunflower wearers share their experiences of daily life with the Sunflower. The topics are often personal and explore invisible disabilities through the prism of the Sunflower

#### Shop for Sunflower products

Individuals who prefer to order online or are not close to an organisation that provides a free Sunflower are able to order directly from their regional Hidden Disabilities Sunflower website.

### For Sunflower members

Organisations that have joined can deepen their understanding of the Sunflower and non-visible disabilities through:

- **the Sunflower training suite:** to train colleagues to identify the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower, gain an understanding of what a non-visible disability is, and become confident to approach and support people who are wearing a Sunflower\*
- **Sunflower invisible disabilities index:** to access information to support Sunflower wearers based on their specific invisible disability and to find out about workplace adjustments they can consider for colleagues and customers\*
- **Sunflower Stories and podcasts:** listen to our Sunflower wearers sharing their experiences of daily life with the Sunflower

Sunflower Members can:

- provide details useful for Sunflower wearers' visits including accessibility and revealing their Sunflower-friendly events\*
- receive sector-specific advice on how to implement the Sunflower\*
- access the Sunflower Media Pack and be supported during their launch\*
- benefit from volume discounts on products and access to Sunflower products specific to companies\*

*\* Access depends on Sunflower membership level*



“ The reason it’s so helpful for my autism is because I’ve learned to ‘mask’ my autistic traits so well over the years that I often pass as neurotypical. This can put me in humiliating, or even dangerous, situations when I start acting in unexpected ways.”





# Why become a Sunflower Partner?

2020 was a pivotal year in the Sunflower story and saw us achieve many key milestones. We have seen exponential growth in the UK to become the leader in our sector.

- **Our enviable brand recognition** – as a globally-recognised symbol for invisible disabilities, we have an established brand and a credible name protected by international trademarks
- **Our proven business model** – working with support from Head Office, enjoy growth and financial reward through a highly recognisable and established brand by supplying Sunflower products and encouraging organisations to become Sunflower members
- **Our deep sector experience** – the Sunflower supports everyone with a non-visible disability and this means every sector is involved. We have experience of implementing the Sunflower in every sector, from transport, leisure, government through to financial services, manufacturing and sport
- **A long-term business partnership** – our Sunflower team are on hand to support you every step of the way – from your own dedicated Sunflower business mentor, to supporting your regional Sunflower website, and creating products specifically designed for non-visible disabilities adapted to your region
- **On-going support and guidance** – including access to a fully developed training suite for organisations that join, to marketing support and access to marketing collateral. We will support you to create awareness and positive interest of the Sunflower on both a national and local basis
- **Exclusivity** in your protected regional area to operate, run and market the Sunflower

## What is the Investment?

- The cost will vary depending on the available territory. Investment can start from as little as £6k.
- Please check out our Global Sunflower Partner portal to find out which Sunflower Partner opportunities are currently available:  
[www.hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/global-partners](http://www.hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/global-partners)



“

I really like that the idea of 'hidden disability' is open to interpretation and I've been able to highlight the difficulties and struggles I sometimes experience because of my transplant, fatigue being the main one.”



# The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is here every day of the year to support those living with invisible disabilities in their communities by raising awareness, training businesses and organisations and sharing stories to help create a more inclusive, understanding society for people with invisible disabilities

People living with non-visible disabilities often face barriers in their daily lives including a lack of understanding and negative attitudes. So some choose to wear the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower to discreetly identify that they may need support, help, or just a little more time in shops, transport, or public spaces.

## Where did it all start?

By 2016, the Accessibility team at Gatwick Airport were already assisting over 500,000 passengers a year but recognised that some passengers had a non-visible disability. How could they assist them too?

Following an evaluation which included the Gatwick team, the Airport Passenger Advisory Group and local and national charities, a green lanyard with a yellow sunflower was chosen for passengers to discreetly choose to indicate they have an invisible disability and may need some support, assistance or simply a little more time when moving through the airport.

## Why a Sunflower?

The Sunflower reflects the idea of confidence, growth and strength shown by people with non-visible disabilities, as well as introducing happiness and positivity.



“ Thank you for all you do, I cannot fully articulate how using this lanyard has absolutely changed my life. It’s given me a tool to use that is both recognised, respected and stops me getting the physical/verbal abuse and emotional discrimination. Thank you!”



## A global presence

2021 has seen a record number of businesses from every sector in the UK joining and recognising the Sunflower to support their colleagues and customers - ranging from retail, travel and tourism, universities, schools and colleges, the NHS, central and local government agencies to premiership football teams, theatres and financial institutions.

“ Our goal, both in the UK and globally, is to continue to raise awareness of the Sunflower so that our wearers can travel and plan their days out in the knowledge that they will be recognised and supported. There is a significant opportunity for businesses and organisations globally to develop their awareness of invisible disabilities and the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a great catalyst to drive change.”

Paul White, CEO of Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

In 2021, we worked with the NHS to support Sunflower wearers during the vaccine roll-out, National Highways to support all disabled drivers in England and World Expo 2020 opened in Dubai using the Sunflower lanyard to support visitors.

Currently, over 100 airports globally have launched and recognise the Sunflower. With many more joining, this will ensure every passenger with invisible disabilities that travels through these airports will receive the same, seamless experience that enables them to continue to travel to visit family and friends and to carry out business trips.

Outside the UK, businesses in countries like France, Norway and Lithuania have recently introduced the Sunflower to raise awareness for people with invisible disabilities and notably in the United Arab Emirates, where the Sunflower is being used to help to make World Expo 2020 inclusive and accessible to all visitors.

## Our Sunflower Partners

### Australia & New Zealand

Bayley House, our Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Partner in Australia and New Zealand, has been excited to welcome numerous organisations as Sunflower members across all sectors. Some of these include the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Go Tafe, Gold Coast Hospital, Australian National Maritime Museum, Queenstown Airport, Art Gallery of NSW, New Zealand Parliament, RAC Arena, KPMG NZ, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences just to name a few.

### Denmark

The Sunflower launched in Denmark in January 2020 with Copenhagen Airport paving the way. Soon after, all other major Danish airports joined the Sunflower and in 2021, Lego House became the first company outside aviation to join. In Denmark, the Sunflower is now present broadly in aviation, the leisure and tourism sector, within public transportation and the healthcare sector and in 2022 the Sunflower will also expand to restaurants, music festivals and retail.



## **Ireland**

We are delighted that the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower launched in Ireland in December 2021.

## **The Netherlands & Belgium**

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower officially launched in the Netherlands and Belgium on 1 March 2021 during a difficult period when Covid-19 restrictions were in place across both the Netherlands and Belgium and many museums and attractions were closed. Regardless, around 70 businesses and organisations now recognise the Sunflower, including museums, public transport networks, attractions, supermarkets, city councils, all Dutch airports, KLM Dutch Airlines, colleges, and many others.

## **USA & Canada**

During 2021, awareness of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower continued to grow across North America where it has been adopted by 35 US and three Canadian airports. The US airports have formed a Sunflower group that shares ideas on how to implement, train, and distribute the Sunflower to travellers. Notably, Jet Blue airlines is the first US based airline to purchase and support the program with a full roll-out planned during the first quarter of 2022 and in Pennsylvania, an Amazon fulfilment centre now supports their employees with the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower.

The US also has three Sunflower friendly US cities: Visit Mesa AZ, Visit Visalia CA, and Visit Vacaville, CA. In these cities, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is distributed at the visitor centre and select local shops and is recognised at hotels, museums, attractions and parks.



“

First time using my little boy's lanyard this week in trampoline park and I was thrilled with the extra support he received from the members of staff there! Actually was bursting with happiness to see him in his element and so happy so thank you!”





# Next steps

If you are interested in exploring this exciting opportunity in more detail, you will first need to complete the online Sunflower Partner application form\* for review by the management team.

## Step 1

### Complete the online Sunflower Partner\* application form

As well as your company details and specifying the region you are looking to cover, you will need to provide a brief overview of your capabilities to:

- demonstrate how your activity with a wide network of charities, influencers and awareness groups in the disability community will support the launch of the Sunflower
- manage successful digital marketing campaigns
- deliver sales growth in both B2B and B2C segments
- manage large scale warehousing and logistics services
- demonstrate your strong commercial acumen and your desire to grow a sustainable and successful business

## Step 2

Following a successful review of your online application form, you will be invited to sign a non-disclosure agreement and meet our implementation team to explore this exciting opportunity in more detail, as well as discussing the details relating to the legal contract. This gives us a chance to get to know you better and find out why you want to become a Sunflower Partner.

## Step 3

We will ask you to submit a detailed proposal to become a Sunflower Partner. You will also have the opportunity to meet some of our other Sunflower Partners to find out if this is the right partnership for you.

## Step 4

If your application is successful, begin the launch of the Sunflower in your selected region



