

FUNction Fitness and Wendy Hall signs the WMCA's Inclusive Leadership Pledge

Wendy Hall with FUNction Fitness has pledged its support to help tackle a lack of diversity in boardrooms across the region by signing up to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Inclusive Leadership Pledge.

The Pledge was set up following the hard-hitting *Leaders Like You* report, published last summer by the independent West Midlands Leadership Commission, which warned that the lack of diversity at leadership level risked damaging the region's economy and wider society.

The report focused on the experiences of black and ethnic minority communities, women, the LGBT community, disabled people and lower social economic groups such as white, working class boys. It set out a number of recommendations, including a call for existing leaders to ensure diversity in their workplaces, identify talent and then mentor and coach that talent to produce future leaders.

Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, who also chairs the WMCA, officially launched the Inclusive Leadership Pledge on 9 January 2019. Wendy joins other prominent West Midlands businesses and organisations to sign up to the Pledge, including the Wesleyan in Birmingham, the University of Birmingham, and Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

The WMCA is now aiming to get 1,000 businesses and organisations to sign up to the Pledge.

Wendy with FUNction Fitness has pledged to build better awareness and support for the positive effects and need for inclusive group fitness through supporting ongoing inclusive group fitness classes, and to provide and deliver support through our inclusive fitness industry training.

Wendy Hall, said: "Its a great idea to be able to share commitment, ideas and inspire others for the need of a growing diverse understanding of people and abilities within all communities and workplaces"

Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street said: "I am delighted that FUNction Fitness has signed up to the Inclusive Leadership Pledge.

"Diversity is one of the key strengths of the West Midlands – but many boardrooms are missing out on fresh talent and alternative ways of looking at an increasingly globalised world.

"The Inclusive Leadership Pledge is a commitment from our biggest employers and organisations that they will improve diversity in their leadership.

"We want 1,000 local businesses and organisations to sign up to the Pledge– so it's great news that FUNction Fitness has pledged its commitment today."

The Inclusive Leadership Pledge states: “We pledge to embed inclusivity in our organisation’s ethos and culture, so that every employee has a fair opportunity in recruitment, promotion and progression. We pledge that under-represented groups will be actively supported so that we can collectively make a difference to the leadership of the West Midlands.”

The statement is supported by a number of pledges to take action – such as:

- We will launch training programmes for under-represented groups in our to cultivate leadership qualities
- We will launch a mentoring programme for under-represented groups in our organisation where they will be linked up with senior staff.
- We will ensure there is always a female and BME staff member on every interview panel
- We pledge that 33% of our senior management will be female by 2023.

Anita Bhalla OBE, journalist and chair of the Leadership Commission, said: “Businesses are understanding that under-representation at leadership level limits aspiration and leads to disaffection. They are signing up to create an environment where future leaders from all backgrounds can be nurtured, acknowledging this ultimately will be good not just for their business, but for society.”

Businesses and organisations can get more information and sign the Inclusive Leadership Pledge online at: www.wmca.org.uk/inclusive-leadership-pledge

ENDS

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Follow WMCA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/westmidlandsca



Notes to Editors:

Wendy Hall created FUNction Fitness as a truly inclusive group fitness class after becoming disabled herself, and further continues to provide Inclusive Group Fitness Training and disability awareness training to other fitness professionals.

About the WMCA

The West Midlands Combined Authority was created on 17th June 2016. It comprises:

Constituent members:

Birmingham City Council, City of Wolverhampton Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

Non-constituent authorities with reduced voting rights:

Cannock Chase District Council; Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council; Redditch Borough Council; Tamworth Borough Council; Telford and Wrekin Council; North Warwickshire Borough Council; Rugby Borough Council; Stratford-on-Avon District Council; Shropshire Council; Warwickshire County Council.

LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships):

LEPs are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They determine local economic priorities and lead on economic growth and job creation within their areas. They are:

- Black Country LEP
- Coventry and Warwickshire LEP
- Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP

Observer organisations awaiting membership:

- Herefordshire Council
- The Marches LEP