**The RIDE HIGHER Framework**

This session introduces RIDE Higher (Realising the Inclusion of Disabled Employees in Higher Education), which is an initiative of NADSN (the National Association of Disabled Staff Networks). It shares the hopes for the National Disabled Staff Survey (launched November 2024) which seeks to temperature check the lived experience of disabled staff within the sector. It offers insights into how Universities can benefit from RIDE Higher’s formal mechanism for sharing best practice on disability inclusion issues for staff. Moreover, it shares the legal and moral arguments for prioritising action. The wider context, and links to Advance HE’s forthcoming holistic EDI Framework, Disabled Student Commitment and University Mental Health Charter, are made, to illustrate how RIDE Higher is part of a movement in the sector towards positive change for the disabled community. Delegates will gain:

* An understanding of the current climate within Higher Education for disabled staff and the need for action
* An appreciation of who RIDE Higher are and how their framework enables the sharing of best practice across the sector
* An understanding of what RIDE Higher could offer for their University/HEI in respect of disability inclusion (of staff)
* An appreciation of how they can get involved or stay apprised of updates pertaining to RIDE Higher.

Dr Melanie Best is chair of RIDE HIGHER, a framework created by and for disabled people working within the HE sector, which offers a formal mechanism for sharing best practice in relation to the inclusion of disabled employees. She is passionate about advancing disability inclusion in Higher Education such that a culture exists that supports and champions disabled staff. Melanie is working to ensure that RIDE Higher complements the forthcoming Advance HE Holistic EDI Framework and operates alongside the Disabled Student Commitment and University Mental Health Charter.

Additionally, she works as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton, as well as being on the Steering Committee of NADSN (the National Association of Disabled Staff Networks). Her research interests focus on social justice, in respect of those with protected characteristics, notably disability. She also conducts research with Paralympic athletes, exploring how leadership connects to performance and well-being.