

## IRLA blog #003

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I recently watched a documentary on the suffragettes' movement and became horrified once again at the escalation of events that arose in respect of a simple request for some form of equality. It is a human trait that as we are ignored, bullied, or made to feel inferior that the end reaction can be way out of proportion to the original grievance. So how are we at listening to those who feel ignored; at exploring their issues and working for resolution?

I have worked with so many people who go out of their way to include newcomers and younger adults. In our market I have seen women open doors for men and 60-year olds carry boxes for 20-year olds. I have worked with a dyslexic filing clerk, a one-armed typist, a transsexual - 30 years before the term existed - and been offered support myself when my own diversity was not being included. Yet I also still see the fear that any variation from the 'tribe' must be removed / excluded. Examples being the blokey pub invitation, the only full-time workers get promotion, the lack of paternity leave opportunities; all of these examples nip away at the best we can be, but despite some horror stories that are still being written I do believe that my 41 years in the London Market were mainly good.

But like the suffragettes I am no good at settling for inequality, I have always spoken up, because at the end of the day those that follow may benefit. It took the suffragettes 9 years to achieve their goal but in this, our twentieth year, IRLA wants to provide a safe space NOW where everyone can say their piece, where every question is as good as the other and where knowledge and skills are available to all whomever they are.