



Impact Matters:

Embedding Inclusion and Implementing Change Through the Six Pillars of Inclusion



**National
Inclusion Week**
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Introduction



The majority of this document's content is formatted in the font Agenda in size 12pt. If you would like to receive an alternative format, [please contact us here.](#)

This guide is part of the toolkit for National Inclusion Week 2024. The theme for the week is **Impact Matters**.

It has been designed to help individuals build a business case for inclusion in their workplace, by having the tools and information for this you are able to **ensure that inclusion in your organisation has an impact that matters.**

About Inclusive Employers

Established in 2011, Inclusive Employers are experts on [workplace inclusion](#) and creator of National Inclusion Week. We are the first and leading membership organisation for employers who are committed to prioritising inclusion and creating truly inclusive workplaces. In inclusive workplaces all employees are valued and contribute towards the success of their organisation.

This year’s National Inclusion Week (NIW) theme, “Impact Matters”, highlights the vital need for understanding, identifying and measuring I&D impact and taking actions that make for genuine, sustainable change.



Creating a truly inclusive workplace is a collaborative effort; it takes genuinely dedicated leadership working with the wider organisation to create sustainable change. As a leader, you cast a long shadow, not only through your words but also through your actions. When leaders visibly role-model inclusion, the impact on your company’s culture and success cannot be underestimated. [Read ‘The business case for inclusion guide’, part of the National Inclusion Week toolkit to learn more.](#)

As a leader, measuring impact in your organisation is likely to occupy much of your time. Similarly, you will be aware of how vital inclusion, diversity and belonging are to create a thriving organisation. However, applying an impact mindset to inclusion is still rare in many organisations. **The six pillars of the Inclusive Employers Standard, Engage, Equip, Embed, Empower, Evaluate, and Evolve**, provide a model for measuring the impact of your inclusion and diversity efforts. Each pillar represents an essential aspect of fostering an inclusive workplace, from initial engagement to continuous evaluation and improvement.

To help your thinking, we have outlined critical actions for leaders aligned to the six pillars. We have added questions for each pillar, encouraging you to reflect on the steps you are taking and the impact they could have.

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Engage

This initial pillar is critical to the foundational work of inclusion, diversity and equity. For any change to stick, your staff must be engaged in your inclusion and diversity plans. You also need to know your workforce to engage them: demographic data and staff engagement levels speak volumes about how inclusion and diversity efforts are received.



Ask yourself

What is your organisation’s vision for inclusion & diversity? How are you engaging staff at all levels in that vision? If you don’t have a vision yet, how can you start co-creating that with your staff?

As a leader, engagement in inclusion is crucial: for you and your colleagues. You don’t have to be an expert in inclusion & diversity to make an impact, developing inclusive leadership skills will help you navigate the way forward:

Empathy - Seeing life through the lens of someone else’s experiences, considering marginalisation, organisational position, and levels of privilege. This understanding can foster a deep sense of compassion and connection with your team members.

Humility - The more senior you are as a leader, the more responsibility you have to drive and serve the rest of the organisation. Approaching new learning with humility and curiosity demonstrates you are willing to learn about the nuanced experiences of your employees.

Openness - Being open to the thoughts, opinions, and ideas shared within the organisation. Openness is a catalyst for fostering a culture of open communication and inclusion.

Engage is your first step towards an inclusive organisation. Leading from the front with empathy, humility and openness will set you up for future success.

Example Action:

Gather quantitative (e.g. demographic data) and qualitative (anonymous surveys and focus groups) to gather insights on how different groups perceive your culture and what specific challenges they face. Build these insights into your I&D strategy.

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Equip

This pillar ensures that you are equipping staff to create and implement policy, procedure, and practice with an inclusive lens.

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Ask yourself

How can we effectively build the skills necessary for creating and sustaining inclusion?

Offer comprehensive learning and development in inclusion for all employees.

- These learning and development opportunities should equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to recognise and address biases, foster empathy and allyship, and cultivate cultural competence.
- [Upskill your Staff Network](#)/ERG members and leaders so they are equipped and embed inclusion in their roles, and ensure you recognise their efforts
- Leaders should role model I&D values within organisational culture.
- Ensure your hiring managers and recruiters are equipped to recruit inclusively with [inclusive recruitment training](#).

Example Action:

Develop an inclusion training module incorporating case studies on intersectional discrimination, such as the compounded challenges women of colour face in the workplace.



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Empower

This pillar looks at how you empower staff, and how you value the contributions of everyone including under-represented groups. How do staff, especially those that are underrepresented, contribute to your organisation? What is their experience? Empowerment is deeply rooted in the organisational culture: how supportive are managers and leaders? Whose voice is heard, and whose isn't? Inclusion is not about over-protecting marginalised individuals, it is ensuring everyone has a voice and can be their professional, authentic selves.



Ask yourself

How can we empower all staff to develop inclusive behaviours?

Empower your managers to be inclusive:

- Managers are crucial in shaping team dynamics and departmental culture. For many employees, the experience with their line manager is how they experience your organisation.
- Managers must aim to have emotional Intelligence, create psychologically safe spaces, and be transparent. They must be aware of the [allostatic load](#) that impacts marginalised individuals and lead with empathy.
- We can support you to empower your line managers with our bespoke approach to [inclusive line manager training](#).

Example Action:

Provide manager development programmes, including mentoring and reverse mentoring opportunities, to empower your line managers to build inclusive teams.

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Diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a daily choice. As leaders, we must communicate that we embrace and not just tolerate diversity.

—Nellie Borrero

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Embed

As we progress through the pillars, each builds on the last. The embed pillar focuses on how you can build inclusion into your organisation's DNA, ensuring change is sustainable and holistic.

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Ask yourself

How can are you ensuring inclusion is sustainably woven through every aspect of your organisation?

How leaders can embed inclusion:

1. Establish your I&D vision and values and articulate them clearly.
2. Set expectations and ensure accountability
3. Understand where there is broken trust and actively look to restore it, knowing it is a gradual process.
4. Foster creativity: Seek to understand marginalised individuals and encourage inclusive innovation across your business.
5. Ensure leadership competence in inclusion, diversity and belonging to maintain an inclusive organisation.

Example Action:

Co-create your [inclusion and diversity strategy](#) with your staff, ensuring it is aligned with your organisation values and wider corporate strategy, and has clear lines of accountability.



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Evaluate

Data is a powerful tool for driving change within an organisation. An evidence-based approach ensures that inclusion initiatives are effective and aligned with organisational goals. The Evaluate pillar enables you to review your progress and benchmark your achievements so far. Without this pillar, it can prove challenging to understand how effective inclusion initiatives are.



Ask yourself

What is your vision for inclusion? How will you know if you're making progress towards it?

Example action: gather inclusion metrics for insights

- **Diversity Metrics:** Track the representation of various demographic groups within the organisation, including gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, and sexual orientation.
- **Recruitment Metrics:** Monitor the diversity of applicant pools, interview panels, and hiring outcomes to ensure fair recruitment practices.
- **Retention Metrics:** Measure the turnover rates of different demographic groups to identify disparities and address retention issues.
- **Employee Engagement Surveys:** Collect feedback on employees' experiences and perceptions of the workplace culture, inclusion efforts, and leadership support.
- **Promotion Rates:** Analyse the promotion rates of different demographic groups to ensure equitable career advancement.
- **Pay Equity Audits:** Conduct regular audits to identify and address pay disparities among different demographic groups.
- **And most crucially:** gather this data over time, and review it regularly.



Equality is leaving the door open for anyone who has the means to approach it; equity is ensuring there is a pathway to that door for those who need it.

–Caroline Belden

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Evolve

This pillar calls for innovation, creativity, and best practices. Organisations wanting to stay ahead of the curve should consistently foster a continuous learning environment that benefits the whole organisation.



Ask yourself

How can you encourage innovation in developing strategies that address systemic barriers and promote sustainable, impactful organisational change? How can your senior leaders go beyond traditional approaches to I&D? How can you encourage innovation?

Example actions:

- **Intersectional Cross-Network Collaborations.** Different ERGs can host shared learning sessions where members discuss common challenges and solutions, promoting a more profound understanding across all staff and identifying ways forward
- **Connect across your industry.** What forums for learning and sharing already exist in your sector? If they don't exist yet, could you lead one? Identify ways to share and collaborate within your industry, to make an impact beyond the boundaries of your organisation
- **Encourage curiosity** and open conversation to drive innovation. True inclusion goes beyond compliance and is about creating a truly inclusive culture where people can thrive
- **Gather authentic feedback** from employees to assess progress, identify learning, and continually evolve and improve



We're here to help

If you are unsure where to start with these steps, discover how our experts can support you with a [Culture Review](#)

Alternatively, [contact us](#) if you would like to discuss any of our other training or consultancy options.

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