Leading Kind

How Inclusive Is Your Organisation?

A PRACTICAL SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR LEADERS



Introduction

INCLUSION IS NOT A SIDE PROJECT

Most organisations want to create workplaces where people can contribute fully and perform at their best. However, good intentions do not always translate into consistent employee experience, effective leadership practice, or fair outcomes.

In our work with organisations across education, public services and the private sector, we often find that inclusion activity is well meaning but fragmented. Policies may exist, but accountability is unclear. Leaders may care deeply about people, but lack confidence navigating complex issues. Data may be collected, but not used effectively to improve decisions.

Importantly, many organisations are doing good work already, but without a clear understanding of where the real strengths, risks and gaps sit.

This short self-assessment is designed to help leadership teams reflect on whether their current approach to inclusion is:

- strategic rather than reactive,
- evidence-informed rather than assumption-led,
- embedded rather than performative,
- and connected to better outcomes for people and organisational performance.

The self-assessment is informed by our extensive research exploring approaches to inclusion across organisations of all sizes operating in a range of sectors. There are no perfect scores. The aim is to support honest reflection and identify where targeted action may have the greatest impact.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

For each statement, score your organisation:

SCORE (1–5)	MEANING
1	Rarely true
2	Sometimes true
3	Mostly true
4	Consistently true
5	Embedded and evidenced

Encourage different members of your leadership team to complete the checklist independently before comparing results.

Differences in scoring are often as valuable as the scores themselves.

Section 1 — Leadership & Accountability

Rarely true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Consistently true	Embedded and evidenced
1	2	3	4	5

STATEMENT	SCORE (1–5)
Leaders can clearly explain why inclusion matters to organisational performance and culture.	
Senior leaders demonstrate visible ownership of inclusion priorities.	
Inclusion is discussed as part of strategic decision-making, not only during awareness events or incidents.	
Managers are equipped to handle difficult people issues confidently and fairly.	
Accountability for inclusion outcomes is clear at executive, team and operational level.	
Leaders understand the difference between intent and impact when assessing behaviours and decisions.	
SECTION TOTAL	**0**

WARNING SIGNS

- Inclusion work sits entirely with HR or EDI specialists.
- Leaders avoid difficult conversations for fear of “saying the wrong thing”.
- Inclusion is discussed mainly in response to complaints or reputational concerns.
- Staff describe leadership commitment as inconsistent or performative.

Section 2 — Employee Experience & Culture

Rarely true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Consistently true	Embedded and evidenced
1	2	3	4	5

STATEMENT	SCORE (1–5)
Staff experience is broadly consistent across teams and departments.	
Employees feel safe raising concerns or challenging decisions respectfully.	
Workplace behaviours and expectations are clear and consistently applied.	
Flexible working, progression and recognition processes are perceived as fair.	
People managers have the capability to manage difference well.	
The organisation actively identifies and addresses barriers affecting different groups.	
SECTION TOTAL	0

WARNING SIGNS

- Different teams operate by different cultural rules.
- Employees describe a “culture of fear” or reluctance to speak up.
- Staff networks repeatedly raise the same issues without visible action.
- Inclusion activity focuses heavily on celebration events but less on structural issues.

Section 3 — Decision-Making & Governance

Rarely true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Consistently true	Embedded and evidenced
1	2	3	4	5

STATEMENT	SCORE (1–5)
Equality and inclusion considerations are built into planning processes early.	
Decisions are supported by relevant qualitative and quantitative evidence.	
The organisation understands where outcomes differ across workforce or service user groups.	
Governance papers provide meaningful insight rather than data without analysis.	
Risks linked to exclusion, discrimination or poor culture are actively monitored.	
Policies and processes are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain fair and effective.	
SECTION TOTAL	0

WARNING SIGNS

- Equality impact assessments are treated as paperwork rather than decision-making tools.
- Data is collected but rarely analysed in a meaningful way.
- Governance discussions focus on compliance rather than outcomes.
- Different parts of the organisation duplicate work or operate in silos.

Section 4 — Capability & Confidence

Rarely true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Consistently true	Embedded and evidenced
1	2	3	4	5

STATEMENT	SCORE (1–5)
Managers receive practical development relevant to real workplace situations.	
Staff understand expected behaviours and how concerns will be handled.	
Inclusion learning is embedded into wider leadership and professional development.	
Teams understand how inclusion connects to organisational goals and performance.	
The organisation balances compassion with accountability when issues arise.	
Staff responsible for policy or service design understand inclusive design principles.	
SECTION TOTAL	0

WARNING SIGNS

- Training is viewed as a one-off compliance exercise.
- Managers escalate routine people issues because they lack confidence.
- Employees experience inconsistency in how standards are applied.
- Inclusion language is widely used, but practical understanding is limited.

Section 5 — Strategy, Impact & Sustainability

Rarely true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Consistently true	Embedded and evidenced
1	2	3	4	5

STATEMENT	SCORE (1–5)
Inclusion priorities are linked to measurable organisational outcomes.	
The organisation can identify what is working and what is not.	
Action plans are realistic, prioritised and properly resourced.	
Different perspectives are considered during planning and change processes.	
Progress is reviewed regularly and communicated transparently.	
Inclusion activity is designed to create lasting cultural improvement, not short-term optics.	
SECTION TOTAL	0

WARNING SIGNS

- Multiple action plans exist, but little changes operationally.
- Activity is driven by external pressure rather than internal clarity of purpose.
- Teams are unclear what success looks like.
- Inclusion work depends heavily on a small number of passionate individuals.

Scoring Guide

YOUR SCORE 0

120–150

Your organisation is likely to have a relatively mature and embedded approach. The challenge may now be consistency, measurement and sustaining momentum through periods of change.

90–119

There are solid foundations, but important gaps remain. You may benefit from targeted diagnostic work to identify where inclusion efforts are not translating into consistent practice or outcomes.

60–89

Your organisation may be experiencing inconsistency between policy, leadership intent and employee experience. A structured inclusion audit could help identify priority risks and opportunities.

BELOW 60

There may be significant cultural, governance or leadership capability gaps affecting employee experience, decision-making and organisational performance. Early intervention is likely to reduce future risk and support more effective organisational change.

WHAT A LEADING KIND INCLUSION AUDIT CAN HELP YOU UNDERSTAND

A well-designed inclusion audit will do more than identify problems.

It should help organisations:

- understand employee and stakeholder experience,
- identify structural and cultural barriers,
- improve leadership confidence and decision-making,
- strengthen governance and accountability,
- reduce legal and reputational risk,
- and focus resource where it will have the greatest impact.

At Leading Kind, our approach combines qualitative insight, policy and process review, evidence analysis and practical recommendations tailored to your organisational context.

Our work is pragmatic, evidence-informed and focused on helping organisations make meaningful, sustainable improvements.

Get in touch to discuss how an inclusion audit could support your organisation.

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