Inclusive leadership playbook for employers

To give leaders a clear, practical guide to building inclusive, healthy workplace cultures through everyday leadership behaviours.

What inclusive leadership looks like

Inclusive leadership is about:

- Leading by example
- Understanding the impact of leadership decisions on people's wellbeing
- Creating consistency across teams and managers
- Valuing difference as a strength

It does **not** require large budgets or specialist HR teams; it requires intentional leadership.

Everyday leadership behaviours that support wellbeing

Examples include:

- Regular, open check-ins with staff
- Clear communication around priorities and expectations
- Flexibility where reasonable
- Following through on commitments
- Addressing issues early and respectfully

West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Healthy Working Life

Dos and don’ts for inclusive decision-making

Do

- Consider how decisions impact different people
- Seek input where appropriate
- Apply flexibility consistently and fairly
- Review decisions if circumstances change
- Be familiar with the external support that is available for staff

Don’t

- Make assumptions about capability or commitment
- Ignore concerns because you’re busy
- Treat adjustments as favours
- Rely on informal or inconsistent approaches

Reflection prompts for leaders

- How do my behaviours influence team culture?
- Do employees feel safe raising concerns with me?
- How do I respond when someone asks for support?
- Are decisions consistent across my team?
- What one thing could I change to be more inclusive?

Quick self-assessment checklist

Use this checklist to reflect on your leadership approach:

- [ ] I encourage open conversations about health and wellbeing
- [ ] I respond positively to requests for support
- [ ] I communicate expectations clearly
- [ ] I apply flexibility fairly
- [ ] I review my leadership behaviours regularly

This playbook is designed to be **practical, reflective and easy to use**, supporting leaders to take meaningful action without adding complexity.