

# The State of Inclusion in the UK: From Ambition to Action



# Foreword

As we launch our first ever State of Inclusion report, I have been reflecting on the challenges that those of us striving to create inclusive workplace cultures have faced. Amidst these, there has been an opportunity to look at what is and what isn't working, and to emerge with the understanding that inclusion, culture, and leadership are part of a whole. Our experience has taught us that inclusion is not just a legal or moral imperative, but that it is simply good for business, and this report will give organisations the evidence to prove it.

At Onvero, we believe that inclusion is for everyone, in that every single person in an organisation should be equipped with everything they need to thrive and flourish. For Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) to evolve and mature, organisations must move from compliance to culture change and from transactional box ticking exercises to real transformation. Creating an inclusive culture, where everyone feels valued and respected, and free to express their views, take risks, raise concerns, make mistakes, and learn from them, without fear is where it's at.

I am thrilled to see that so many organisations are committing to inclusion, and the increasing benefits that employers are enjoying as their DEI strategies are implemented and embedded. However, it's equally important to acknowledge that there is still a long way to go.

What matters now is that wherever organisations are on their inclusion journey, they keep going. The business benefits of a diverse workforce and inclusive culture are clear, and we are here to help you every step of the way.

**Sandi Wassmer,**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Onvero

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# Methodology

This report is a combination of commissioned research and data insights from Onvero's Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmarking tool.

The research was conducted to examine the state of workplace inclusion in the UK, uncovering the differences between what businesses say and what employees experience.

It examines the differences between how inclusion is perceived and how it is actually experienced, considering how inclusion is embedded in daily practice, the key priorities of HR leaders and decision makers, and the role that diversity, equality

and inclusion (DEI) plays in driving trust, engagement, and positive business outcomes. Commissioned by Onvero and carried out in partnership with Sapio Research, the survey was conducted among 300 HR, L&D, DEI and C-Suite leaders/decision-makers and 2,000 employees across the UK. The research took place in September 2025, and participants were invited to take part in an online survey by email invitation. At an overall level, results are accurate to  $\pm 2.0\%$  at 95% confidence limits assuming a result of 50%.

The research, conducted by Sapio, is presented alongside insights from Onvero's 2025 Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmark. TIDE is a self-assessment evaluation and benchmarking tool developed by Onvero to help organisations to assess their inclusion practices and approach across a range of areas, from diversity data monitoring and strategy to employee engagement and wellbeing. 180 organisations entered the 2025 benchmark, providing data insights into DEI performance across the public, private and third sector and 21 industries.

Encouragingly, the research shows that commitment to DEI is evident in most UK workplaces, and that when actively and authentically implemented, there are significant, positive impacts on business performance, productivity and employee retention. However, findings indicate that implementation is inconsistent and underdeveloped. This report also highlights common challenges and offers ways for organisations to enhance DEI efforts for positive business growth.

# The evolution of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) in the UK

Across the UK, DEI is evolving. The conversation is shifting from awareness and compliance to maturity and measurable impact. Despite recent political developments that have challenged the value of DEI, the evidence tells a different story: inclusion continues to deliver tangible benefits for people, culture and business performance.



This report, produced by Onvero, explores the current state of inclusion in UK workplaces. Combining third-party research and insights from our Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmarking tool, it examines how employees and leaders feel about DEI, where organisations are in their journey and what is being prioritised in 2025 and beyond.

Our findings show that **9 in 10 workplaces report having a DEI strategy in place** – with varying degrees of integration with the overall business strategy. Encouragingly, for businesses with a mature approach, the benefits for employee wellbeing, productivity and business performance are far reaching.

However, as with any developing practice, progress is uneven. As this report will explore, strategy implementation is inconsistent, there is a disconnect between leadership perception and employee experience, and data collection varies. In other words, many organisations have policies in place but lack the depth and rigour for the full implementation required to achieve an inclusive culture.



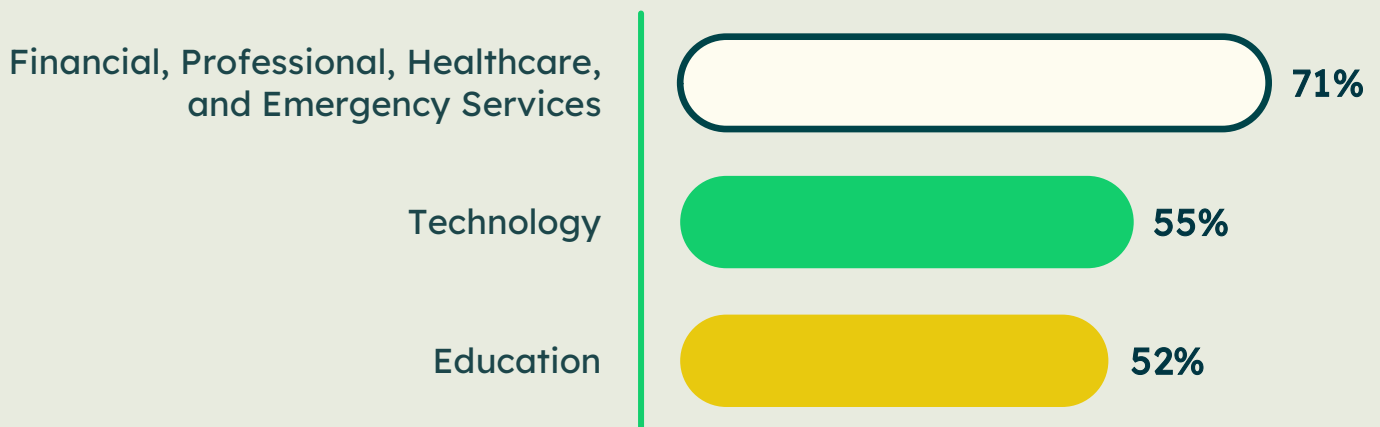


# Evidence of (inconsistent) progress

According to TIDE data, the public sector performs the strongest in their inclusion practices, with an average overall score of **72%**, compared to the third sector (**63%**) and private sector (**62%**). This is perhaps a reflection of how the public sector is bound by tighter regulations, and more stringent approaches to DEI. However, the average score for TIDE 2025 is **66%**.

Within industries, Financial Services, Professional Services, Healthcare, and Emergency Services lead the way at an average of **71%**. Comparatively, Technology has an average score of **55%**, followed by Education at **52%**. While both sectors show ongoing commitment, there is certainly room for improvement.

## TIDE score by industry



The data does suggest that industries with a history of limited diversity and inclusion are continuing to face steeper challenges than their more progressive counterparts. However, these disparities also signal a workplace landscape that is open to evolving, rather than standing still. Across industries, pockets of progress exist, for example, psychological safety – the degree to which employees feel safe and comfortable sharing their ideas, opinions and concerns – scored relatively high for respondents of our research. However, this optimism is tempered by other findings, showing that true equality and inclusion remain inconsistently embedded across workplaces.

These disparities also signal a workplace landscape that is **open to evolving**, rather than standing still.

# The measurable impact of inclusion

The benefits of DEI extend far beyond perception. In organisations that embed DEI meaningfully, employees stay on average nearly four years longer than in those that do not. Our research also finds that **68%** rate productivity as excellent where inclusion is higher, and **46%** report lower turnover.

These statistics demonstrate the business case for DEI in real terms. When inclusion is embedded into strategy, policy, and culture, it delivers measurable improvements in wellbeing, engagement, productivity, and retention – creating a more resilient and successful organisation overall.

The goal of this report is therefore not to focus on what organisations are lacking, but to highlight what is possible when DEI is done well. It showcases the practices that drive genuine inclusion, the business benefits they create, and the actions that will help organisations take their next step towards building truly inclusive workplaces.

In organisations that embed DEI meaningfully, employees stay on average **nearly four years longer** than in those that do not.

Perception vs. reality:

# The gap between ambition and action

Across the UK, organisations are ambitious in their commitment to DEI. On paper, the picture appears promising: most have articulated a strategy, some with accompanying initiatives and clear communications. Yet, when we look beyond the headline figures, a more complicated story emerges. The experiences of employees are often misaligned with the perceptions of leaders and decision makers, revealing an uncomfortable truth: DEI in many UK organisations remains more performative than transformative.

# Strategy implementation

According to 2025 TIDE data, **84%** of respondents said their organisation had a DEI strategy in place. Similarly, our research shows that **89%** of leaders report having some form of DEI strategy in place (to varying degrees). Of these:

**27%**

said their organisations have a DEI strategy in place, and it is visible and applied in some areas of the organisation.

**25%**

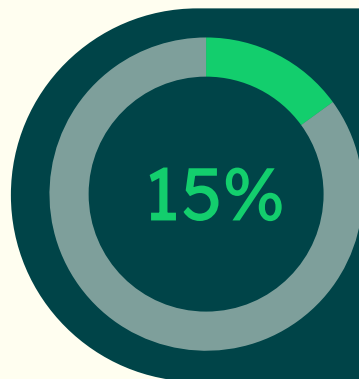
stated that their organisation has a fully embedded DEI strategy that is widely visible, supported by leadership, and regularly applied and reported on

At first glance, these figures suggest progress. However, TIDE data also shows that strategy and planning was the lowest performing area for organisations when it comes to their approach and progress on DEI, with organisations scoring an average of just **53%**. A considerable proportion of organisations in our survey also reported being at early stages of strategy implementation (**23%**). In other words, while strategies exist, many organisations lack the action plans required to implement them, which is essential to achieving meaningful culture change.

# The employee reality

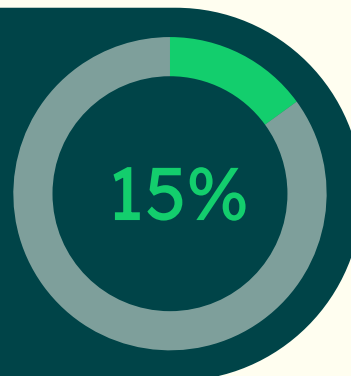
When we shift the lens to employees alone, confidence in DEI strategies drops sharply. According to our research, only **15%** of employees agreed that DEI strategy was fully embedded and part of everyday culture, while an equal **15%** said they were unaware of their organisation's policies or procedures on DEI.

These figures illustrate that while there is intent in setting organisational strategy, lack of implementation is impacting how employees experience inclusion in their day-to-day.



**15%** of employees agreed that DEI strategy was fully embedded and part of everyday culture.

**15%** of employees said they were unaware of their organisation's policies or procedures on DEI.



These differences become more apparent when examining the implementation of specific inclusion and wellbeing initiatives throughout the organisation.

### **Championing inclusion**

When it comes to actively championing inclusion, **82%** of Business Decision Makers (BDMs) believe that leaders do so, compared to only **60%** of employees.

### **Regular team building opportunities**

**83%** of BDMs agree that there are regular team building opportunities, compared to **57%** of employees.

### **Fair treatment**

**83%** of BDMs agree that all employees are treated fairly, compared to **63%** of employees.

### **Knowledge of support structures**

**82%** of BDMs agree that they know who to approach for help on DEI matters, compared to **64%** of employees.

These figures are not small discrepancies. Rather, they reflect a notable perception gap between leaders and employees.

Leaders consistently rate their organisations more positively than employees do, particularly on areas that speak directly to day-to-day experience and workplace culture.



# Progress against objectives

It is not just perceptions that highlight this immaturity. When asked about progress against DEI objectives, TIDE found that organisations admitted uneven results:

**26%**

of organisations said they had achieved between **76–99%** of their DEI objectives.

**25%**

had achieved between **51–75%**.

**32%**

reported achieving less than half of their objectives.

This lack of progress demonstrates that, while intentions may be sound, follow-through is inconsistent. Targets set in boardrooms do not necessarily translate into action that meaningfully changes workplace culture for employees.

The findings highlight that the immaturity of DEI in the UK is not simply about whether a strategy exists. Rather, it lies in whether that strategy is implemented, embedded, and trusted by the people it is designed to support. There is a risk that some organisations are still operating in a performative mode, emphasising the existence of policies or initiatives while struggling to embed them into culture and practice.

As such, it is critical that leaders prioritise bridging the perception gap. Businesses must invest in creating cultures where employees can see, feel and experience inclusion in action. That means ensuring leadership behaviours align with stated commitments, providing transparency on progress against objectives, and embedding accountability at all levels of the organisation.

"Some still try to discredit equity work, calling it performative or worse, unfair, but real change takes effort. It means involving absolutely everyone and creating genuine psychological safety. As always, inclusive teams need strong leadership and visible allyship from the top. True inclusion leaves no one behind. If you believe in fairness, respect and dignity, you should feel like you belong in the conversation."

**Vicky Jones & Sam Gingham,**  
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Managers, Great Western Railway

Psychological safety,  
wellbeing and belonging:

# Building the foundations of inclusive culture

Psychological safety, wellbeing, and belonging are the cornerstones of an inclusive workplace. They are the conditions that enable people to express themselves authentically, share ideas, raise concerns without fear of negative consequences, and feel valued for who they are. Together, they turn DEI from a strategy to a lived culture which drives innovation, trust, and performance.

Across the UK, progress in these areas is accelerating. Organisations are increasingly investing in initiatives that promote mental health, inclusion, and open communication. However, the data also highlights an opportunity for organisations to ensure that these initiatives go beyond ticking boxes and instead, reflect on the needs and wants of employees.

# Creating a safe space for authenticity

Our research shows that **70%** of respondents agree that their organisations provide a space for them to feel safe and express their true selves. This is a strong foundation, however, a deeper look at the data suggests a split: only **68%** of employees agreed with this statement, compared to **83%** of business decision makers and **77%** of HR leads.



This is not a sign of failure but of progress in motion. Organisations are actively building psychological safe environments; the next step is ensuring these efforts are experienced consistently across all levels.

Encouragingly, many businesses are already embedding structures to support this. TIDE data shows that **83%** of organisations have employee resource groups or networks to give people a collective voice, while **82%** encourage senior leaders to role model accountability and treat mistakes as learning opportunities. Additionally, **78%** provide DEI training for all employees – a vital step in normalising inclusive behaviours.

# Investing in leadership and values

Training remains a powerful lever for change. According to TIDE data, more than half of organisations now provide inclusive leadership training (54%) and sensitive conversation training (55%), while 68% offer mental health and wellbeing training. This investment reflects growing recognition that inclusive leadership directly shapes how safe employees feel to speak up and contribute.

However, psychological safety depends on more than training alone. It is also built on the alignment of values and actions. TIDE data shows that 79% of organisations say values are emphasised and modelled by senior leaders, and 64% integrate them into day-to-day communications.

This is a strong start, but consultation remains limited: only 36% of organisations engaged all levels of the business in defining those values. Expanding this involvement offers a major opportunity to strengthen trust and ownership, ensuring values feel lived rather than prescribed.

When leaders and employees co-create the principles that define culture, everyone becomes a stakeholder in inclusion.

This shared accountability is what transforms psychological safety from an initiative into a way of working.

# The everyday reality of wellbeing and belonging

TIDE data shows that across every sector, wellbeing and belonging emerges as the strongest-performing area evaluated: private (85%), public (87%) and third (81%). Indeed, our research shows that organisations are taking tangible steps to support employees, with widespread access to mental health resources (86%), employee engagement and feedback forums (85%) and regular one-to-one and team meetings (84%).

TIDE data further shows that most organisations already provide flexible working (97%), Employee Assistance Programmes (97%), mental health first aiders (93%), peer support groups (87%) and team building opportunities (77%).

And the impact is visible in culture: our research shows that 47% of respondents say mental health initiatives have improved inclusion, and 51% agree that regular meetings have strengthened culture and belonging. These findings demonstrate that wellbeing investments are starting to pay off when it comes to overall sense of inclusion and belonging.

# Aligning with employee experience

Despite clear progress, opportunities remain to deepen impact. Employees continue to highlight areas that matter most to their experience – flexibility (27%), fair and responsive policies (25%), and transparency around progression (25%). These insights reveal where inclusion can evolve from good to great.

By aligning wellbeing programmes more closely with employee feedback, organisations can transform inclusion from a set of initiatives into a true competitive advantage. This is where data and dialogue intersect: collecting and acting on employee insights ensures wellbeing initiatives meet real needs and deliver meaningful change.

The UK's most successful organisations are those that see psychological safety, wellbeing, and belonging not as separate activities but as interconnected elements of inclusion. Together, they shape environments where people are confident to contribute, where diversity of thought drives innovation, and where trust fosters high performance.

By embedding inclusion into everyday culture – through leadership, values, and employee experience – organisations move beyond the tick-box and create workplaces that are not only fairer but also more successful.

Leadership behaviours:

# The need for widespread accountability

Leadership plays a defining role in shaping how DEI is experienced across organisations. Encouragingly, when it comes to leadership, employees and leaders agree that honesty is key. Beyond that, however, the research shows significant differences in perceptions of accountability, authenticity and what qualifies as DEI success. These discrepancies highlight that leadership is not yet playing the role it must if DEI is to progress from intention to impact.



# Leadership's role in DEI conversations

Leadership accountability is far from universal across UK organisations. According to TIDE data, only **44%** of organisations include defined roles and responsibilities for leaders within their DEI strategies.

This means that in over half of organisations, accountability is either informal, fragmented, or entirely absent. Where it does exist, the distribution is uneven:

**38%**

of organisations place DEI strategy accountability with a member of the C-suite or executive leadership, while

**21%**

delegate responsibility to HR leads, such as HR directors or managers.

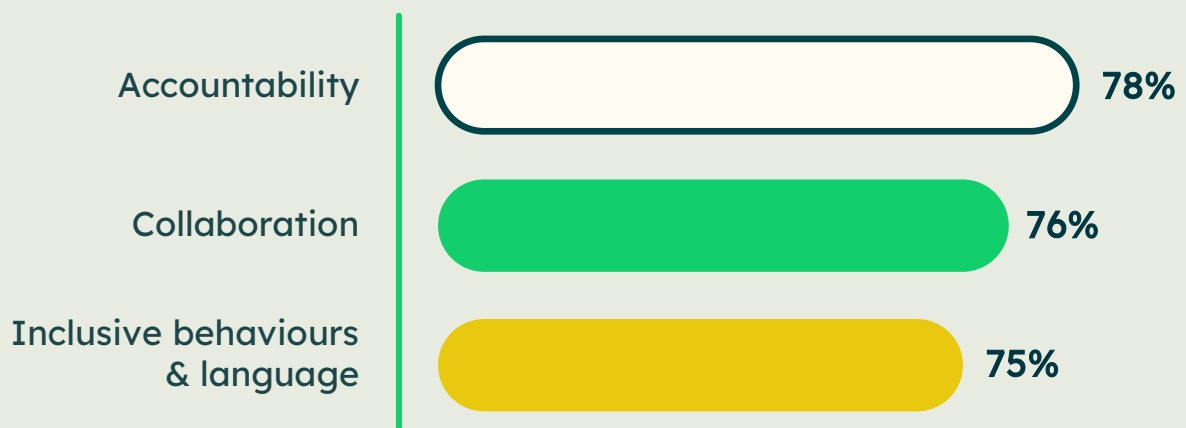
However, this distribution matters. Among the highest-performing industries, DEI accountability sits with the C-suite, embedding responsibility at the heart of decision-making. Conversely, when responsibility is pushed down into HR or spread across departments, progress tends to be slower and less consistent.

# The behaviours employees value versus what leaders deliver

When it comes to leadership behaviours, both employees and organisations share a clear understanding of what good looks like. According to TIDE, the top three qualities organisations expect their leaders to commit to and demonstrate are accountability (78%), collaboration (76%) and role-modelling inclusive behaviours and language (75%).

Employees echo some of these same expectations in how they currently describe their leadership teams. Our research shows honesty is the most common quality (41%), followed by inclusivity (31%) and compassion (27%). This aligns with the qualities of inclusive leadership assessed in TIDE, suggesting that organisations are broadly setting the right expectations.

## Qualities organisations expect leaders to demonstrate:



The next opportunity for progress lies in deepening authenticity, accountability, and collaboration – qualities that foster trust and belonging. Nearly half (**47%**) of leaders describe themselves as honest, broadly in line with employees.

However, **37%** of leaders consider themselves accountable, compared to **27%** of employees, while **32%** believe they display authenticity compared to only **19%** of employees. Collaboration is also underwhelming: **30%** of leaders describe themselves as collaborative, compared to only **26%** of employees.



# How leaders and employees define DEI success

The divide extends into how DEI success is defined. Leaders often focus on outcomes linked to business performance and reputation. For example, in our survey, they point to improved team performance and collaboration (48%), employees reporting a strong sense of belonging and trust (44%), fair and inclusive recruitment (44%) and having a reputation as an inclusive employer (43%) as key.

Employees, by contrast, emphasise fairness and everyday inclusion. They report personally seeing fair and inclusive recruitment and progression practices (34%), a diverse workforce choosing to stay long term (33%), inclusive behaviours embedded in day-to-day work (32%) and colleagues reporting a strong sense of belonging and trust (30%). Improved performance and collaboration were ranked far lower as markers of DEI success (25%), as was external recognition (21%).

Taken together, these findings reveal that the state of DEI in the UK is intricately linked to leadership accountability and behaviours. Where organisations perform best, accountability sits clearly with the C-suite, making inclusion a strategic priority.

It also shows that employees care most about inclusive behaviours and fair practices shaping their daily experience. Leaders, while not dismissive of these, tend to prioritise performance and reputation. Encouragingly though, employee belonging appears high on leaders' agendas.

If UK organisations are to move beyond the immaturity that defines many DEI efforts, leadership must evolve.

Leaders must not only model honesty and accountability, but also demonstrate authenticity, sponsorship, and cultural intelligence. These qualities may be harder to measure, but they are central to employees' trust and belief in the sincerity of DEI efforts.

The state of DEI in the UK is intricately linked to leadership accountability and behaviours.

Trust and authenticity:

# From external image to internal impact

Trust and authenticity sit at the heart of meaningful DEI. They determine whether employees believe in their organisation's commitment and whether DEI is viewed as an integral part of culture rather than a corporate message. Indeed, our research reveals that employees distrust initiatives that feel performative and nowhere is this clearer than in the balance between external image and internal action.

TIDE data assesses how organisations communicate and uphold their organisational values, both externally and internally. **86%** of respondents said their organisational values are published on the organisation's website, while **72%** stated that organisational values are explained and assessed as part of the recruitment process for all potential employees, including in job adverts and interviews.

On the surface, this demonstrates transparency and commitment. However, the issue is not in stating values externally, but rather when this is not matched by internal action.

Many companies have come under fire for “diversity-washing” – the practice of promoting a false image of diversity, equality, and inclusion without implementing substantial changes or following through with meaningful action to support it. This risk does not solely lie with how customers or external stakeholders view your organisation. Employees who perceive their organisation as more concerned with image than substance can lose trust, question leadership commitment, and disengage from their work. Performative action, in this sense, undermines both credibility and the effectiveness of genuine initiatives.

# Is DEI too focused on external image?

External promotion of DEI does have its benefits. It can enhance a company's reputation, help distinguish them from competitors and aid in recruitment efforts. However, our research demonstrates the importance of skilfully balancing this promotion with concrete steps.

45%

of respondents believe that DEI initiatives focus too heavily on external image and not enough on driving internal change.

Industry differences provide further nuance. Those in the aerospace, defence, transport, fire and rescue, or police were more likely to agree (61%), compared to those in hospitality and retail (39%) or public sector roles like government, education, housing, and local authorities (42%). This divergence, as mentioned in the introduction, may be reflective of sector-specific contexts – public sector organisations are bound by tighter regulation, while consumer-facing industries may face high-profile scrutiny, making them more sensitive to how they are perceived.



The perception of performative DEI is also reinforced by a widespread concern about box-ticking. Over half (**51%**) of respondents feel their organisations place too much emphasis on ticking boxes and meeting regulations than fostering a genuine culture of inclusion. This view is most prevalent in organisations that do not prioritise DEI (**63%**) compared to organisations that take it seriously and where it goes beyond promises (**42%**). HR are more particularly attuned to this issue, with **56%** saying there is too much emphasis on box-ticking and meeting regulations, compared with **48%** of business decision makers and **50%** of employees.

While these figures suggest room for improvement, they also demonstrate growing self-awareness. There is a recognition that DEI must evolve beyond compliance and become integral to how businesses operate.

“It is great to see that the business benefits of inclusion continue to be clearly evidenced, as shown in the State of Inclusion report. We have a clear DE&I strategy at AECOM in Europe and India) that is focused on really delivering cultural change – not just providing an external badge. Demonstrable results, like those in this report, underline why measuring the impact of what we do is important.”

Claire Wilkinson,  
Wellbeing & ED&I Lead  
(AECOM Europe and India)

# The role of external benchmarks

While performative action can damage credibility, external validation and comparators can be extremely useful. Benchmarks and frameworks, when used meaningfully, can play a valuable role in supporting DEI maturity.

Tools like TIDE show how external benchmarking, when done for the right reasons, can drive genuine improvement. By helping organisations assess their inclusion practices, measure progress, and identify areas for development, TIDE provides a roadmap for continuous improvement:

not a badge of compliance, but a tool for **transformation.**

It is not wrong to promote DEI externally, but communication must align with reality. When organisations showcase their values without visibly acting on them, they risk losing credibility. Employees quickly recognise when messaging outpaces internal progress, and disengagement can follow.

UK workplaces must implement and embed impactful initiatives designed to make employees feel the sense of belonging, psychological safety and inclusion that makes a thriving workplace. Only when using their external voice to reinforce genuine internal change can they strengthen both culture and reputation.

Systemic inclusion:

# The limitations of data and policy

To be effective in 2025, it is critical that strategies are informed and supported by robust data. Collecting diversity data helps organisations to identify gaps in representation and develop meaningful interventions to drive inclusion.

# Data collection varies widely

Encouragingly, **67%** of organisations are managing to collect **70%** and above of employee diversity information that they choose to collect, according to TIDE data. However, of the diversity data being collected, just **39%** of organisations capture all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

When the scope of diversity data is expanded to include additional characteristics beyond the Act, the picture becomes even more fragmented. TIDE tracks a wider set of indicators intended to provide a more inclusive understanding of employee's lived experiences, considering areas that are not protected characteristics but where individuals may face disadvantage or discrimination.

Only **2%** of organisations collect diversity data on all the protected characteristics and the following:

- Socio-economic status
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender identity
- Experience of the care system

Even within this expanded list, the depth of diversity data collection is uneven. While **82%** of organisations gather data on gender identity and **58%** ask about caring responsibilities, only **32%** ask employees about their socio-economic status and as few as **6%** ask about experience of the care system.

# Data-driven decision making

The research shows that diversity data collection is happening to varying degrees, and is being used, at least to some extent, to inform DEI decisions. But the lack of consistency means that far too many organisations are operating in the dark. Without comprehensive data, businesses cannot identify and address biases, measure representation or evaluate whether interventions are working.

At its core, failure to collect and use diversity data prevents organisations from building the inclusive cultures they aspire to. Policies and strategies may be written, but without measurement they remain aspirational rather than actionable.

Importantly, diversity data collection must not be seen as an isolated compliance task, but as a cultural signal.

In organisations where employees feel psychologically safe, they are more willing to disclose personal diversity data. Robust diversity data collection can enable organisations to design more targeted and meaningful diversity and inclusion initiatives. When combined, the result is a virtuous cycle where data informs action and action builds trust, making employees more likely to share.

# Employers are open to change

The good news is that employers are proving to be open to exploring wider data collection tools. **85%** of respondents say they are using employee engagement and feedback forms now, or plan to in the next 12 months to boost workplace culture and inclusion. TIDE data also echoes these findings, showing that **91%** are conducting employee engagement surveys.

Beyond this, **71%** of respondents say they are using external partnerships or accreditations now, or plan to in the next 12 months. These approaches not only provide validation but also create opportunities to benchmark progress and share best practice.





The DEI edge:

# How embracing inclusion translates to a competitive advantage

While it remains a developing practice across many workplaces, the evidence shows that when DEI is done well, the rewards are tangible, measurable and far-reaching. Inclusion is no longer just a moral or legal goal – it is a proven driver of retention, wellbeing, productivity, and business performance.

# The business case for inclusion

The benefits of DEI extend far beyond perception.

In organisations that embed DEI meaningfully, our research shows that employees stay on average **3.76** years longer than in those that do not (7 years compared to 10.76 years).

This correlates with a sharp rise in happiness levels, where

**88%**

of employees report being happy in inclusive organisations, compared with just

**51%**

where inclusion is neglected.

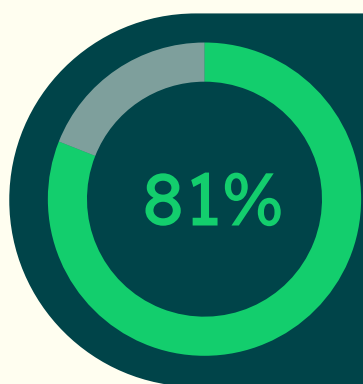
We can already see from this report the link between strong DEI implementation, lower turnover, and greater employee satisfaction.

The performance impact is equally significant. Productivity is rated excellent by **68%** of leaders and decision-makers where inclusion is ranked highly, compared with only **27%** where inclusion is weaker. Retention tells a similar story, as **46%** report lower turnover in inclusive workplaces, compared with **17%** where inclusion is not prioritised.

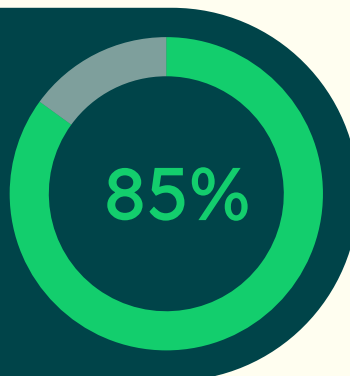


Fairness in career progression is also markedly higher, with **81%** of employees agreeing that they have fair and equal access to promotion and development opportunities in organisations where DEI is embedded, compared with **40%** where it is not.

Finally, DEI maturity strengthens organisations' ability to attract talent. **85%** of respondents agree inclusive organisations are effective at attracting diverse candidates, compared with just **46%** where inclusion is not prioritised. In an increasingly competitive labour market, this advantage cannot be overstated.



**81%** of employees agree that they have fair and equal access to promotion and development opportunities in organisations where DEI is embedded



**85%** of respondents agree inclusive organisations are effective at attracting diverse candidates

# The opportunity ahead

Taken together, these findings demonstrate not only the moral value of inclusion, but its role as a decisive business driver. The UK is at a pivotal stage of its DEI journey. In the face of division and “anti-woke” culture, there remains evidence of progress, collaboration, and impact.

Organisations that continue to invest in DEI are proving that inclusion creates more engaged teams, healthier cultures, and stronger business performance.

However, to unlock the full value of DEI, organisations must now acknowledge that surface-level approaches are no longer enough. True progress requires systemic, organisation-wide commitment grounded in accountability, authenticity, and robust data.



# The findings of this report point to four key actions:

## Move from performative to purposeful DEI

Initiatives must be embedded in culture, not just presented externally. Employees see through box-ticking, and their trust depends on visible follow-through.

## Evolve leadership

Leaders play the most influential role in whether employees feel safe and supported. As such, they must embrace accountability, authenticity, and role model inclusive behaviours and language.

## Invest in data-driven, systemic approaches

Without robust data, organisations cannot track progress, close gaps, or create strategies that address real employee needs.

## Prioritise psychological safety, wellbeing and belonging

These are not optional extras but the foundations of inclusion, retention, and productivity. Creating a psychologically safe environment is essential to unlocking every employee's full potential.

UK workplaces are at a turning point.

Most organisations have the strategies, tools, and evidence available to them. The opportunity now lies in building on the progress made, embedding inclusion into culture, leadership, and decision-making. Businesses that do so will not only outperform their peers but will also help shape a fairer, more innovative, and more sustainable future of work.



Thank you.

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