



Inclusion Playbook



2022 (v1.1)

A Post Office guide providing simple yet powerful questions and guidance to help you create a more inclusive working environment for everyone.

You will encounter links throughout this document. If you have a printed copy and want to access the links, an electronic version of this document is available on the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion page of the hub](#).

Contents

Foreword from Nick Read	3
We're building an inclusive culture	4
Our Ways of Working	4
Measures of success	5
What does it take to be an inclusive leader?	6
Allyship is important	7
Language that belongs	8
Behaviours that don't belong	9
Ask yourself the right questions	11
Inclusive hiring	12
Ways to create an inclusive interview	13
Being an inclusive leader	14
Amplifying talent	15
Practical ways that you can be an inclusive leader	16
Further reflection	17
In conclusion	17



Foreword from Nick Read

GRO

We are nothing without you and your teams – the people who create and maintain the products and services our employees, Postmasters, Strategic Partners and our customers use every single day. That's why it's so important we continue to provide a place where all of you feel you can thrive. Since focusing on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, the Leadership team and I have reflected on both our own behaviours and actions – but also what it will take for this business to be truly inclusive, so we can set ourselves up for a successful and sustainable future.

We all know that mindsets are not easy to shift. This playbook is a great place to begin as it outlines some of the practical things we can all start thinking about to make Post Office even more inclusive. None of this is revolutionary, but we all need to recognise that small changes that we make as individuals can make huge differences to the people we lead, both now and in the future.

Nick Read

Nick Read
CEO Post Office

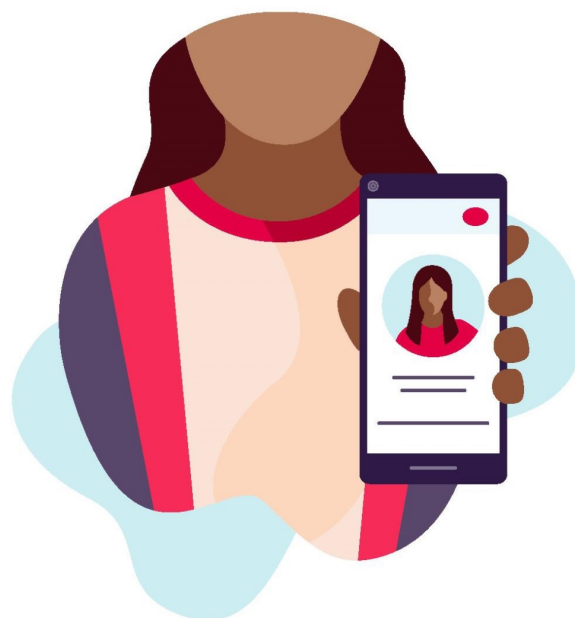


We're building an inclusive culture

Diversity has the power to unlock new ideas and new potential

For us to enjoy the benefits that diversity brings, we first need to take steps to ensure that everyone feels included. That means creating a culture where we embrace different perspectives, backgrounds and ideas. Above all, we want Post Office and our Post Office branches to be a place where:

- Difference is valued
- Everyone has a voice
- Everyone feels safe and respected
- Inclusion is just part of how we work every day



Our Ways of Working

Here at Post Office, we embrace three behaviours that are vital to our continued success.

Our Ways of Working have been designed by colleagues, for colleagues. We've listened to what you had to say about what we do well, what we could improve and what we need to change.

Our Ways of Working provide us with guidance and a shared way of doing things, which will help us all to create a friendly, helpful and collaborative environment that truly supports our colleagues.

Our Ways of Working are supported by our 'We are Post Office' colleague commitments where we celebrate diversity and inclusion, encourage learning and growing, and champion taking care and supporting each other.





Measures of success

How do we know that what we are doing is working?

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) team are using data to measure how we are doing:

- In the Annual ED&I employee survey
- Monthly Diversity Dashboard – current and trend data collected from SuccessFactors
- Annual Ethnicity Pay Gap and Gender Pay Gap
- By tracking the percentage of employees from under-represented communities

This information will highlight the positive changes we're making and also reveal areas where we need to improve – and we should welcome the opportunity to do better.

SuccessFactors personal data

We collect 'about you' data, which gives us an understanding of the different communities our employees belong to, such as ethnic group or sexual orientation; if you want to find out more [here is a short video](#) to explain why we collect this data and how we use it.

Disrupting bias

Reflecting on 'about you' data in our everyday decisions, via our diversity dashboard, helps us to challenge and prompt our thinking in the moment. Are we always giving the same opportunities to the different types of people?

Measure progress

As we move forward, we look to diversify our talent pools and 'about you' data is how we'll measure our progress. It'll show whether we're attracting, engaging and retaining under-represented and marginalised groups, and whether our representation is proportionate throughout all levels of the organisation. Encouraging your teams to keep their 'about you' data in SuccessFactors up to date helps us track our success and identify areas of opportunity. The 'Personal Information' data shared by an employee in SuccessFactors will never be used to identify that individual. It is only ever reported at organisational level and is used by the ED&I team for analysis, to track success and to identify opportunities.

What does it take to be an inclusive leader?



Allyship is important

Allyship is the act of using your voice and your actions to identify and address the oppression, biases and barriers that people from across different communities experience.

Being an ally means advocating for people and communities that experience continued marginalisation and under-representation due to their identities – these people may include disabled people, people from the LGBTQ+ community, religious groups, people of different ethnic backgrounds and women professionals.

Allyship is a role that we must actively engage in, either visibly or behind the scenes. If we want to call ourselves allies, we must commit to taking an active role in doing the work – even when it feels difficult or uncomfortable.

We as leaders, mentors, sponsors, team members, colleagues and friends must commit to being better allies if we truly want to create workplaces and a society that are inclusive and equitable.

Allyship may seem daunting, but our solidarity makes a difference. Every drop in the ocean matters when it comes to creating more inclusive workplaces and a more inclusive society.

[This is an excellent video](#) to help you understand why allyship is important



Language that belongs

The things we say – and the words we choose – are vital to helping people feel part of our team.

Language is always evolving, so what's inclusive today may change tomorrow. For that reason, we can't give you a specific list of dos and don'ts, but here are a few things to be mindful of:

Acronyms can be confusing

These can be hard for people outside your team to understand, and they may be uncomfortable to speak up and ask what you really mean.

Try not to use jargon

It can create difficulties for those whose first language isn't English, while people with autism may interpret things very literally.

Try not to make assumptions

If the person you're talking to says they are in a relationship, say 'partner' instead of assuming they have a boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife.

'Guys'

If there are people in your team who you know this offends, or you're addressing large audiences, use terms like 'everyone' or 'folks'.

It's okay to say...

Black, Asian, gay, lesbian, Muslim and Jewish when talking about people, if it's relevant and in the right context.

He/she/they

When referring to a specific person whose gender pronoun you know, it's okay to use 'he', 'she' or 'they'. If not, it's okay to ask which they prefer.

Try not to downplay the impact of mental health

Terms like OCD, bipolar, psycho or schizo have a negative connotation; psychopathic tendencies and schizophrenia are real illnesses that people experience and you never know what someone is going through.

We won't always get it right – but it's okay to make mistakes

There is no one-size-fits-all approach and personal preferences will vary. If we are in any doubt, we just need to ask what people prefer.

Use inclusive visuals

Post Office Marketing team has a set of inclusive visuals that can be used for presentations and posters. Use these to ensure that everyone feels represented.



Behaviours that don't belong

Non-inclusive behaviours and [microaggressions](#)

At the heart of an inclusive workplace is respect and trust. It means that we understand we can be our authentic selves (within reason, workplaces are also a place of compromise) without fear of reprisal, judgement or negative consequences. There are many ways for leaders to demonstrate inclusive workplace behaviours. If practised consistently, these inclusive workplace behaviours foster a professional environment where people feel valued, recognised and heard. These positive behaviours create a working environment that contributes to business success. There are, however, some behaviours that are not inclusive. This may not be intentional, however they can have a lasting impact on the people they touch – always be aware of how your behaviours could be interpreted.

Examples of non-inclusive workplace behaviour:

1. **Blaming others** for difficulties and not shining the light on your own communication styles and behaviours.
2. **Inappropriate tone of voice.** Aggressive, patronising, condescending or sneering tone of voice.
3. **Inattentive listening.** Interrupting, talking over, criticising in public. On email the 'cc' button is something that is sometimes used to publicly humiliate or shame someone by including managers and peers unnecessarily. Not paying attention, multitasking when talking to someone.
4. **Making assumptions before checking the facts.** Ask 'open questions' to get behind the issue. Another behaviour which tends to follow this is making accusations. "You are always late. You are lazy and not interested in this job." Try "You seem to be struggling with timekeeping. What's going on for you?"
5. **Playing favourites.** Not treating people the same, based on race, religion, gender, size, age, personality, country of origin, or even personal preference. Consistency is very important to an inclusive workplace.
6. **Hi-jacking someone else's idea.** Taking credit for someone else's work and passing it off as your own. Even worse is to own the idea and let the originator do the hard work!
7. **Any kind of harassment or bullying.** Bullying, teasing or harassment based on differences in race, religion, gender, body size and shape, age, personality, country of origin, or even personal preference.
8. **Verbal abuse.** Name calling, shouting, verbal abuse and insulting others. Not following basic etiquette – saying please or thank you. It is always the small things that make a difference.
9. **Unfiltered comments or jokes.** Making jokes or remarks related to difference whether this is race, religion, gender, size, age or country of origin. In a multicultural setting, speaking in a language that others may not understand.



10. **Command and control supervision.** Micromanaging: not giving a person autonomy to manage their own workload or trusting them to meet deadlines. Assigning unrealistic deadlines rather than collaborating to reach mutual agreement.
11. **Indirect communication.** Gossiping or creating rumours: not dealing with issues directly via constructive communication, but discussing behind closed doors or around the water cooler. Undermining someone's reputation with hints and innuendo.
12. **Excluding or ignoring.** Withholding information that would help a person be successful, cutting them out of email chains or meetings. A lack of transparency can be a power play to create insecurity and manipulate. This is a form of psychological abuse.
13. **Criticising more than you praise.** Not receiving recognition is a common factor for burnout.
14. **Inconsiderate scheduling.** Organising events outside core hours at times which will impact a specific demographic e.g. breakfast meetings which may impact parents.
15. **Inappropriate social events.** Holding team events with themes that will negatively impact a specific demographic e.g. rock climbing could impact older workers or the physically less able, going to the pub could impact people with 'no alcohol' religious beliefs.
16. **Being a bystander.** Failing to intervene and stage an upstander intervention when a specific incident takes place. Allowing contentious issues to fester.
17. **Letting ego win.** Focusing on symbols or wording of communication which overtly displays personal authority.
18. **Creating division not cohesion.** Playing colleagues off against each other for stretch assignments or results. Using uncertainty to manipulate.
19. **Not respecting other people's time.** Being late for meetings and talking over others. Not taking personal responsibility: blaming the system, others or the hierarchy.





Ask yourself the right questions

You can interrupt your natural bias by checking yourself until it becomes a natural part of the way you think and act.

Here are some techniques you can adopt and questions you can ask yourself to challenge your bias and check whether you're being as inclusive as you can be:

SUBSTITUTE

In your mind, swap one person for another and ask yourself if you would feel and respond in the same way:

- Would I be saying the same thing about a man?
- Would I be thinking this if they worked full-time?

SWITCH UP YOUR PERSONAL NETWORKS

List the top three people at Post Office who you would go to for advice or if you had a work related issue:

- Do they look or think like you?
- Do you actively seek out points of view different to yours, or is it too inconvenient?
- Who could you go to instead?

SEPARATE FACTS FROM ASSUMPTIONS

If you make assumptions you're missing half the story. When making decisions about projects, promotions or people, ask yourself:

- 'What do I actually know about this person?' as opposed to 'What's my feeling about them?'
- What facts from their experience can you use to make your decision?
- Do you make assumptions about what parents want from a career, or what they're able to do?

Inclusive hiring

You have biases – we all do. It's natural. That's why we need to recognise it, then challenge it.

There are many types of unconscious bias – below are the biases that are most common during the interview process:

STEREOTYPING When we assume something of a person because they belong to a group.

HALO/HORN When we allow one strong point about the candidate to overshadow or influence everything else they say.

AFFINITY When we have a more favourable opinion because the person is like us.

CONTRAST When a stronger candidate interviews after a relatively weaker candidate and appears stronger than they actually are.

REGENCY When we recall the most recently interviewed candidates because our brains are hardwired to remember the newest details.

To help you think more about inclusivity when hiring, ask yourself these questions before you begin:

- Which stages of the process could bias creep through?
- Have I already got in mind the type of person I'm looking for?
- Am I placing too much value on someone who will fit into the team the easiest?
- Am I trying to find someone like the person who was in the role before?
- Do I automatically dismiss candidates because of their education, previous employers or industry experience?
- How will I challenge the recruitment team to shortlist candidates I would usually not consider?

For some more information on unconscious (and conscious) bias during the interview process, [article one](#) and [article two](#) are two good sources to get you started.



Ways to create an inclusive interview

Inclusion is a shift in mindset; a determination to be a better ally and to do better every day.

Our recruitment team works hard to present a balanced shortlist of candidates whenever possible – we ask you to consider one or two of the questions listed below when you are interviewing potential employees. These questions highlight cultural beliefs and differences and give you a better idea of your candidates' overall motivation and goals.

We encourage you to ask one or two of the questions below towards the end of the interview. Remember to ask the same questions to all your candidates.

- What personal values are most important to you?
- Describe what you consider an ideal work culture
- Describe your understanding of diversity and inclusion and how it's related to this position
- Describe your experience with diversity and inclusion in previous companies.
- How have you strived to make others feel included in your day-to-day role?
- Describe an example in your previous work experience where you have worked with a diverse team?
- Describe a situation where you helped resolve an issue or conflict related to diversity and inclusion
- Can you tell me about a time when you were an advocate for diversity and inclusion at your previous company?
- How would you approach advocating for a more diverse and inclusive working environment with a colleague who did not appreciate its importance?

Here are some tips to help you create an inclusive interview:

DO:

Bias plays a part in how receptive we are – **be aware.**

Pair with an interview partner who is different from you.

Pairing with an interview partner who looks or thinks differently to yourself can help balance our biases.

Focus on consistency

The interview should be the same for every candidate, regardless of their gender, race, age or disability. Ask the same set of questions and use their answers in a scoring system to see whose abilities most closely match the job description.

Think about neurodiversity

Everyone's brain works in different ways. Allow time for people to process information and be flexible in your approach.

DON'T:

Don't ask multiple questions at once.

Overloading them with too much to think about may not draw their best response.

Don't assume

Just because they don't think the same way that you do doesn't mean they'll be difficult to work with. Make efforts to put them at ease.

Don't ask for their previous salary

Under-represented people are paid less, and remember that job titles and salaries do not always reflect the level of experience someone has. The recruiter and role review process will establish that role requirements and salary expectations match.

Don't hire for 'Culture Fit'

Hire for 'Culture Add' – who could give a different perspective, or help us push the Post Office values even further?

You represent our external brand, you are the ambassador

That means you're one of the first people they'll see, so you represent and influence our brand.

YOU ARE SHAPING OUR FUTURE

That means you get to decide who helps us reach our goals – not just now but in the future too.

For more information on Post Office recruitment and processes please refer to the [Post Office Recruitment Hub](#).

Being an inclusive leader

We're putting a lens over the key decisions you make so we can be transparent about our inclusivity.

If you've ever questioned why someone was hired or promoted, it's because you're looking for meaning and the values behind the decisions that were made. As a leader, we need to anticipate those questions and be sure we challenged the bias that gets in the way of us considering different options, and involving different groups of people, when making our decisions. Ultimately, the process behind our actions needs to be crystal clear.



Here are some points to help you reflect on your inclusive decision-making:

How do you make decisions on:

FLEXIBILITY?

- Have you ever provided flexible working options for new roles or promotions?
- Are you a role model for flexibility?
- Can you give an example of when you've helped someone progress by using a flexible working pattern?
- Do you still think flexible working is only for people like 'working parents'?
- Can you think of a time when you've left the office to pick up your children or make a personal appointment?
- Do you actively encourage days to work from home?
- When thinking about part-time workers in your team, ask yourself: is it better to have some of them than none of them?
- Be aware of the [Post Office Flexible Working](#) policy which can be found on the PeopleHub

How do you make decisions on:

PAY & REWARD?

1. All management grade roles in Post Office are evaluated and benchmarked against external market data. Your People Partner can help ensure that the Reward team are engaged to support with this.
2. We aim to be a "median" payer in the market, but we also consider the internal relativities within the team, business unit and the grade band in general when giving recommendations.
3. If in doubt or you want advice on an offer or a salary review, speak to the Reward team or your People Partner in the first instance.

Amplifying talent

Our inclusive behaviour can help uncover and express the hidden talents of others.

By understanding different groups of people, we can discover qualities about them that we were not previously aware of. This not only increases their confidence and self-esteem, but it could unlock a talent that helps you solve a problem.

Mentoring and Sponsorship are good ways that you can make hidden talent visible.

Mentoring and Sponsorship:

Mentorship is a relationship where a more experienced employee helps guide and shape another employee with less experience. Mentors offer advice, guidance and can be a sounding board for mentees. They can help the individual make career decisions, work through a challenge, or be a role model for you to emulate. While mentorships have traditionally been a relationship between two individuals, other forms of mentoring can have the same benefits as a traditional mentoring connection.

Sponsorship, in comparison, is a relationship between a protégé and a person who has authority or influence they can use to help them in their career development or advancement. A sponsor is an individual who can open up opportunities. They are not only more experienced, but can lift you to a higher level in the company. It can include talking to you about job opportunities, nominating you for boards or projects, and advocating for your advancement within the company to senior leaders or decision-makers within the company.



MENTORING

Studies show that mentoring is key to unlocking inclusion. Everyone gets a new perspective. Do you mentor people who are like you? Are they within your comfort zone or from a 'familiar' network?

It's hard to be what you can't see. People from under-represented groups may find it more challenging to aspire to or put themselves forward for opportunities. Do you mentor anyone from under-represented groups?

Who can you bring into important discussions, or introduce to influential people, who wouldn't usually get access?

SPONSORSHIP

As a leader, you can use your influence to shape the future of a hidden talent through sponsorship.

We've all heard statements like 'They just need to get themselves out there'. It's said with the best intentions, but if we want others to recognise the talents we know they have, we can do more to help, such as:

- Speak their name when they're not around
- Share their career goals with people who matter
- Recommend them for additional projects
- Talk about what you've learned from them
- Invite them to high profile meetings
- Give them speaking slots
- Endorse them publicly
- Give credit for good work they have done

Why not set yourself a challenge and actively sponsor one or two people. As stated above, it's easy to do – some examples include: speak about them in a positive way, credit their work, recommend them to work on special projects, invite them to leadership team meetings to present on something they've delivered – in general, be their 'salesperson'.

You can also refer to the [Post Office Talent Hub](#) for information on how to identify and develop internal talent.

Practical ways that you can be an inclusive leader

- Talk about ED&I in team meetings
 - lived experiences
 - unconscious bias
 - why is equity important?
 - inclusive policies at Post Office
- Encourage participation in our [diversity network groups](#)
- Set a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objective for your direct reports, this could be focused on the environment, our charitable work or something related to ED&I (supporting the Post Office ED&I Council or the networks, helping deliver change in the business etc.)
- Encourage your team to learn about and participate in ED&I activities
- Establish a sense of belonging for everyone
- Be an empathetic leader – listen and support
- Forget about 'fit' and focus on helping individuals thrive
- Learn to identify and eliminate microaggressions from yourself and your team
- Allow the team time to get to know each other

What can you do to broaden your horizons?

- Branch out and connect with colleagues who are different from you. Make an effort to speak with them and be more social with people outside of the co-workers that you regularly interact with
- Attend meetings or events that expose you to members of different communities
- Ask questions that get people to open up; this can be as simple as listening and then responding with a question that invites the other person to expand. When you seem genuinely interested in other people's lives, they are more likely to let their walls down and show you their true selves
- Consume different media. Look for podcasts, TV shows, books and movies where the people involved have different identities from you
- Follow a diverse group of people on social media – don't stick to the things that you already like and are comfortable with



Further reflection

Does each person in your team get equal access to you?
Is your time driven by business demand or who you like to spend time with?

Who gets promoted based on potential and who gets promoted based on performance? Who's had to 'prove it' again and again?

Does one person get the benefit of the doubt over others?

Who gets the 'glamour' work that opens doors and ignites careers? Who gets the unsung projects?

Do I always give credit to the actual person who completed the task? Both when giving and receiving praise.

Who are you nudging to put themselves forward for roles and opportunities?

Do you always go to the same people to help solve problems or present and own projects?

Do you know more about some people in your team than others i.e. birthday, family and partners, interests?

In conclusion

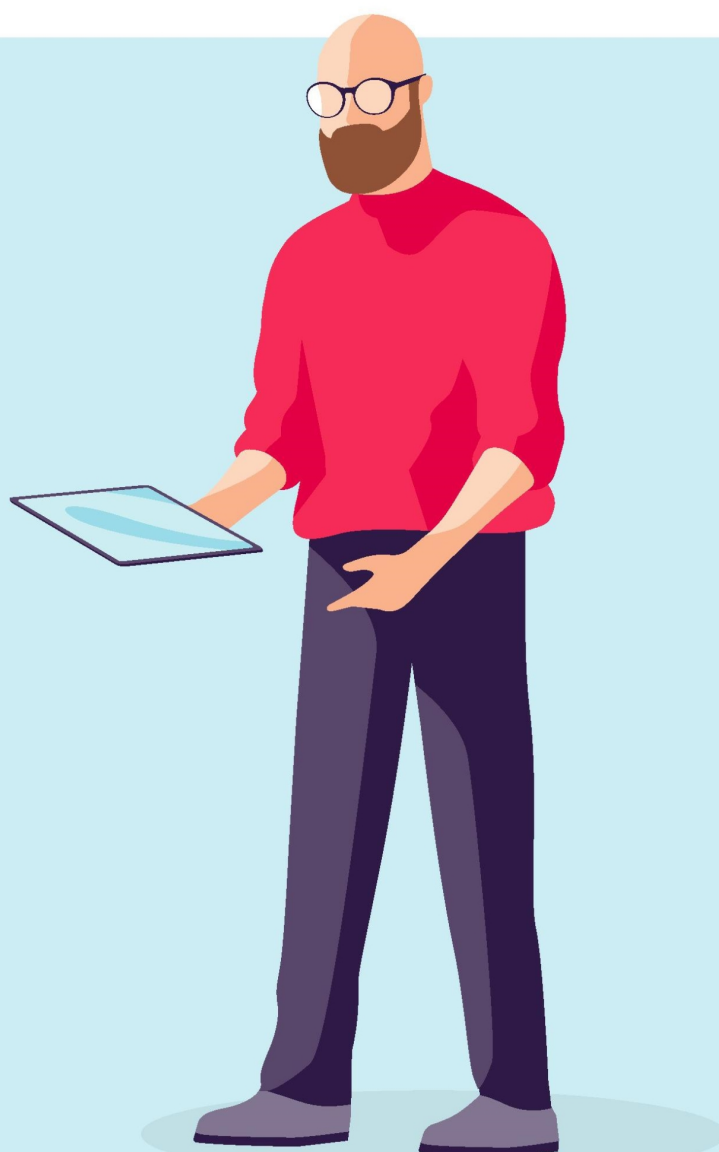
Remember that being an inclusive leader means that you need to **do something**. It's not enough to read through this booklet and nod your head in agreement; good intentions are not enough. Why not re-read the playbook and identify three or four things that you know you can put into practice today? – formulate in your head how you will make those changes and start now.

Also consider that although many of the things you have read may seem obvious, making changes to the way you work, and to inclusion, is something that will require daily practice until it becomes a habit. Stick with it, you may make a life-changing difference to someone in your team.

Make sure to communicate your commitments to your team so they can support you with your actions and share your objectives.

Everyone is different – and that's something we value. Listening and being curious about different perspectives is at the heart of making Post Office more inclusive. Our approach is to act with better intent when we think about our future pipelines, so managers are encouraged to reflect on their bias that can get in the way of a fair process.

We aren't asking people to dramatically change who they are. We just ask that they reflect on and challenge their behaviours, work practices and processes so we can be more inclusive. We appreciate we won't see massive changes overnight – it will take time to overcome societal barriers and challenges, but nothing will change if we don't challenge ourselves to 'be better'.





Ben Spencer-White