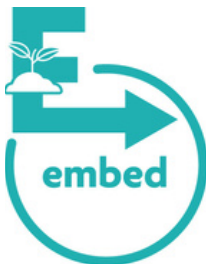


Embed Pillar

Inclusive Decision Making

The Inclusive Employers Standard is built upon six pillars of inclusion, which serve as its framework. These pillars—Engage, Equip, Empower, Embed, Evaluate, and Evolve—determine the success and impact of inclusion efforts within the workplace.

To support organisations at all stages of their inclusion journey we host a panel event series focusing on one pillar at a time. Out of these events we have produced a suite of resources sharing insights and experiences on a specific topics.



The Embed pillar explores how well you embed inclusion across every level of your organisation, from your mission and values to each stage of the employee journey. In this resource we are going to explore embedding inclusion into wider decision making.

When embedding inclusion into organisational decision-making, we need to accept that it won't just happen naturally. Even if you have good intentions and great people, you still need to work at embedding inclusion. There are four main areas to consider: structure and governance, training and guidance, consultation and co-production, and data and benchmarking.

Structure and Governance

Having a structure to follow ensures you are embedding inclusion consistently across your

decisions and you can evidence this if anyone in or out of your organisations wants to know more about how a decision was made. One approach you can use is an equality impact assessment. An equality impact assessment (EqIA) form is a template for analysing a proposed decision for its potential effects on individuals from different groups.

Anyone who has worked in the public sector may have heard of these before. Whilst the process itself is not a legal requirement in the UK, it is a recognised approach to ensure public

sector organisations are meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is a legal requirement. Whilst this is not a legal requirement for private or third sector organisation, it is still considered great practice to follow.

Similar approaches with slightly different names are used across the world, e.g., diversity impact assessments in Europe or DEI assessments in the US. Whilst there are numerous different [equality impact assessment templates](#), they all contain the same main key features. To start with, you outline the decision you are looking to make. Then, you identify groups likely to be affected, usually covering the protected characteristics groups in your country's legislation as well as any groups that are relevant to your organisation, such as part-time workers, shift workers, etc.

An equality impact assessment should not just be about filling in a form or ticking a box. It is a structure to consider any decision from the viewpoint of different groups to identify any potential impacts and inequities, to find suitable solutions that will mitigate these impacts to reduce the chance that any particular group is more disadvantaged than others.

It is also important that the governance and oversight of your chosen approach are clear. Everyone needs to understand their role and how they contribute meaningfully to the process, as well as what the consequences are for the organisation and your people if this isn't done well. Having senior oversight of this process also helps to highlight it as an organisational priority, not just a 'nice-to-have'.

Training and Guidance

It is also important to remember that everyone needs to understand how to follow

your chosen approach. This will likely require, at a minimum, a written guide on how you would like the process to be undertaken. Often, it is more effective to run [interactive training](#) sessions to help people build practical skills to apply your chosen approach to their department, function, or project.

Consultation and Co-production

No one should be making decisions on their own. It's important to have a diverse range of perspectives informing your decision-making. This will look very different depending on the size and nature of your organisation. Staff networks, ERGs, or affinity groups might come to mind when we think about staff consultation, and yes, this is a great solution as it allows you to get a representative perspective from staff across different groups. However, this is not always the right approach for smaller organisations, who may find it easier to have a single working group or action learning set with volunteers from across the organisation.

There are many different formal and informal ways to gain insight from staff, customers, service users, and your local community. It's important to explore how to engage the right stakeholders at the right time. Don't leave your consultation to the end; take a co-production approach from the start.

Data and Benchmarking

We wouldn't make financial decisions without financial data, so we shouldn't be making decisions that affect people without additional insights on the potential impact and the best ways to mitigate it. You can gain data insights from a wide range of sources, internally (such as your HR system or staff surveys) and externally (such as benchmarking and accreditation through the [Inclusive Employers Standard](#)).

Inclusive decision-making should be business as usual

National Highways is a government-owned and publicly funded organisation responsible for managing and improving over 4,500 miles of motorways and major roads across England. To ensure people and inclusion are at the heart of any decision—big or small—any decision requiring funding or affecting employees, service users, or the local community includes an embedded Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process. To achieve this, the EqIA form is integrated into their business case form for all new ideas or projects, as well as into all review processes to maintain the inclusivity of existing projects or activities. Additionally, they have a group of trained D&I advocates across the organisation who support teams with the EqIA process, bringing a diverse range of perspectives to the decision-making process. Since embedding this, they have seen positive impacts on the quality of their decisions and the

mitigation of potential risks. They have even been directly complimented by the Secretary of State for Transport for how they have applied this process to all their major projects, such as the outstanding accessibility work on the A63 Castle Street project in Hull and the considerations of the local community and wildlife in the M25/A3 Junction 10 project in Surrey.

Lisa Gill, the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead for Major Projects Delivery, shared these top tips to consider when embedding inclusion into your decision-making:

- Early identification of key stakeholders and advocates is crucial for effective collaborative decision-making.
- Effective communication around your EqIA approach ensures that everyone involved understands the process and the outcomes.
- Consider the social value and lasting legacy of decisions, in addition to the immediate impact.
- Share lessons learned from both successes and mistakes with your teams to strengthen future decisions.



Guest Speakers:

Joanne Waldron
HR Senior Advisor -
Diversity & Inclusion
National Highways

Lisa Gill
Equality, Diversity &
Inclusion Lead for Major
Projects Delivery
National Highways

Helpful Resources

- [A definitive guide to Equality Impact Assessments](#)
- [Equality Impact Assessment Template](#)

“We found the experience of completing our IES submission invaluable as it gave us the opportunity to get a holistic view of our D&I activity, see the progress we have made and identify what we can do to continue to improve”

Joanne Waldron
HR Senior Advisor - Diversity & Inclusion



Want to learn more?

Email us at standard@inclusiveemployers.co.uk