

EMPLOYER OF THE FUTURE

Being an inclusive employer survey report 2023



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Introduction

In the drive to attract and retain the best talent, the benefits of building an inclusive and authentic workplace are clear. However, the inclusion survey report we published in 2022 highlighted that, whilst 80% of organisations reported inclusion as being a focus area, most were still in the early stages of developing strategy.

With this in mind, we decided to bring our inclusion survey back for 2023, with the aim of comparing progress and themes over the last 12 months. Over 90% of you this time around told us that inclusion was either still a focus area for your organisation or quickly moving up the agenda. But how are organisations pushing ahead practically with support for employees? Which parts of the inclusivity landscape are showing improvements and which would benefit from closer attention?

We were delighted to receive responses from over 65 organisations across a range of sectors, providing valuable insights. This report provides a snapshot of the survey findings for 2023 and comparison data against 2022, together with our practical tips on how you can help your organisation to become a more inclusive Employer of the Future.

Thanks, once again, to everyone who contributed.

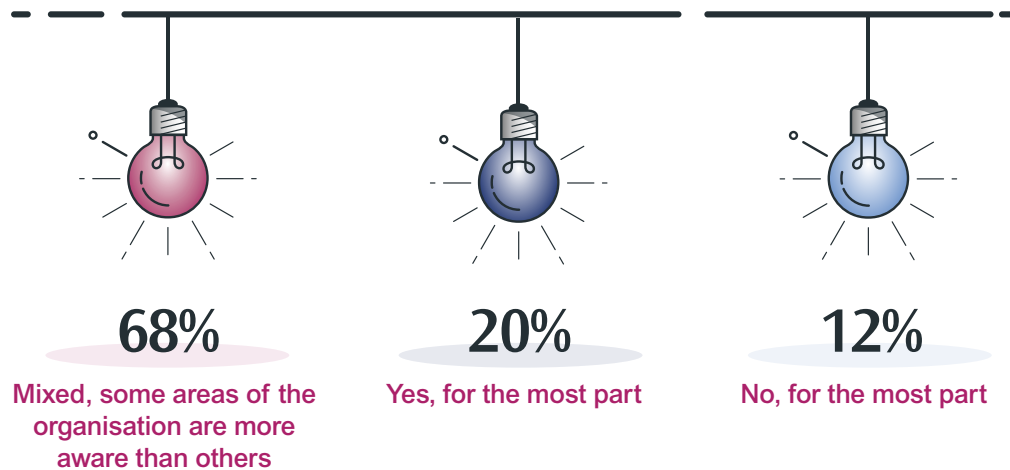


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Awareness and training

Do you think there is an understanding within your organisation of the difference/s between diversity and inclusion?



Inclusion goes to the heart of employees' sense of belonging in the workplace and is different to the more familiar topics of equality and diversity. It is encouraging to see that the number of you reporting a lack of understanding within your organisation has fallen slightly from 14% last year to 12%. Similarly, those of you who said that some areas of your organisation are more aware than others has risen to 68% (up from 54% last year) which shows a positive direction of travel. Continued education and awareness across all levels of your organisation is key to boosting these levels further.

Do you think senior leadership in your organisation demonstrates awareness and commitment to inclusion?



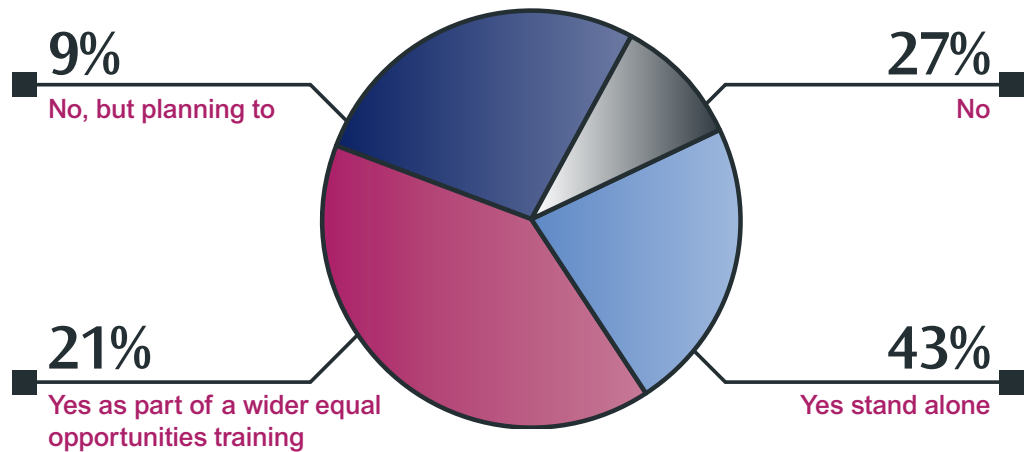
Think senior leadership in your organisation demonstrate awareness and commitment to inclusion



Think senior leadership in your organisation could do better to demonstrate awareness and commitment to inclusion

Inclusion isn't just a topic for HR and People teams – it can and should be embraced by everyone! In the last year, the number of you who think that senior leadership in your organisation demonstrates awareness and commitment to inclusion has risen to 35% (up 7% on last year). However, 61% of you still feel that your senior leadership teams could do better. This should remain a focus area in that case, as leadership behaviours and 'top down' modelling are crucial for embedding a truly inclusive culture.

Does your organisation run training for employees on inclusion?



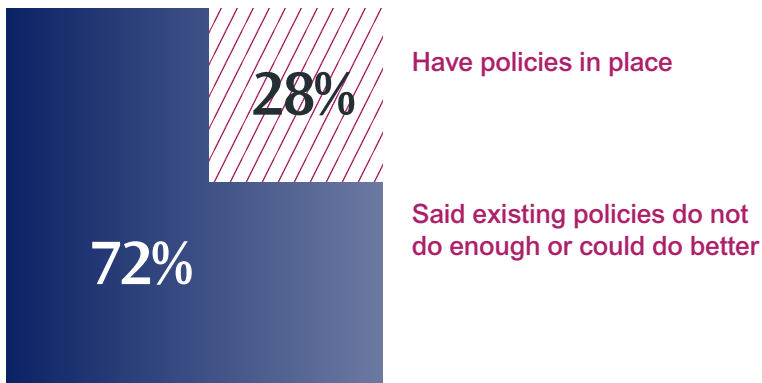
Traditionally, we have seen inclusion being overlooked as a dedicated training topic, but times are changing! It is fantastic to see that over 43% of you now run stand-alone inclusion training within your organisations; a huge leap from the 23% who were doing so last year. However, there is still progress to be made for the 27% of you who do not offer inclusion training and have no plans to do so – investing time in dedicated training is a practical way to ensure that employees have a deep understanding of inclusion and how they can help to create a more inclusive workplace.

Action points

Where to start	Where to go next
<p>Begin a conversation appropriate to your organisation about inclusion – what it is, benefits and importance. Our Employer of the Future report (https://www.trowers.com/-/media/files/brochures/employer-of-the-future.pdf) may help to set the scene.</p> <p>Gather as much information and data as you can to help with conversations about inclusion, including this report and other information about what employers are doing elsewhere. Our weekly ‘Trowers Tuesday’ sessions cover lots of inclusivity focused topics and are free to attend.</p>	<p>Introduce targeted inclusion training for all employees. Format is less important than content; face to face courses, group online training and e-learning can all play a role.</p> <p>Find ways to engage more deeply with your leadership team on inclusivity and improve awareness: attending leadership meetings, presenting data and strategy on inclusion, appointing inclusion allies/champions within the leadership team. Every small step can help on the journey.</p>

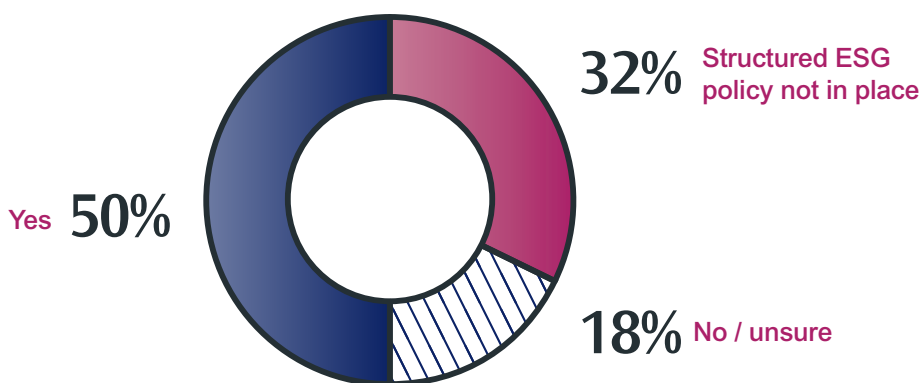
Policies and implementation

Do you think your organisation’s employment policies and procedures do enough to facilitate an inclusive culture?



Whilst policies and procedures are not an answer in themselves, an accessible suite of documents will provide a practical starting point to foster greater inclusion. Over 28% of you (up from 16% last year) now feel that your policies and procedures are up to scratch in this area, which is welcome progress. Whilst only 5% of you still think that your policies are not doing enough, there are plenty of organisations in the middle who have identified room for improvement. A focal point for 2024 maybe?

Does inclusion feature as part of your organisation’s broader ESG policy or strategy?



The environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda remains a hot topic across many organisations. Inclusion plays a fundamental role in the development of ‘S’ strategies and policies, yet only 50% of you feel that you are recognising and reflecting this currently – exactly the same percentage as last year! This is an area where tangible focus can be brought to the ESG discussion by HR and People teams and the results can be truly meaningful. The growing conversations around neurodiversity and social mobility are great examples.

Do you think your organisation’s day to day management practices do enough to facilitate an inclusive culture?



Think your organisation is doing well



Think your organisation is not doing enough or could be doing better

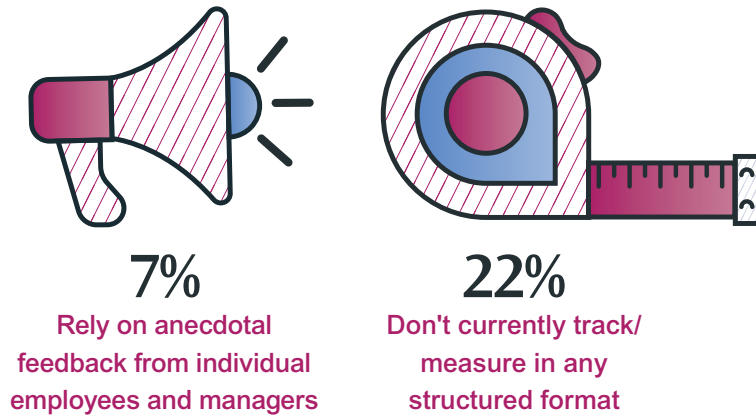
Culture is key when it comes to inclusion; the most impressive suite of policies and training will fall down if the core values are not lived in practice. Happily, 16% of you (up from 12% last year) feel that your organisation is doing well in this area. However, more worrying is the 13% of you who feel that your day to day management practices don’t do enough (up 7% from last year). This could be down to growing awareness of the work to be done, but equally could indicate a problem with management buy-in. For those of you who have identified an issue, this should be a key part of your inclusion action plan.

Action points

Where to start	Where to go next
<p>Undertake an inclusion policy audit: identify what policies you are missing, where you could do better and what resources you need to fill gaps.</p> <p>Ensure that your training on inclusion contains practical examples and case studies of how management practices can foster (and undermine) greater inclusion.</p>	<p>Upskill on ESG and consider how you can weave inclusion into the thread of the ESG conversation in your organisation.</p> <p>Speak to your employees and managers to find out where the inclusion ‘pinch points’ lie in day to day practice for your organisation – you can then start to develop an action plan led by the data.</p>

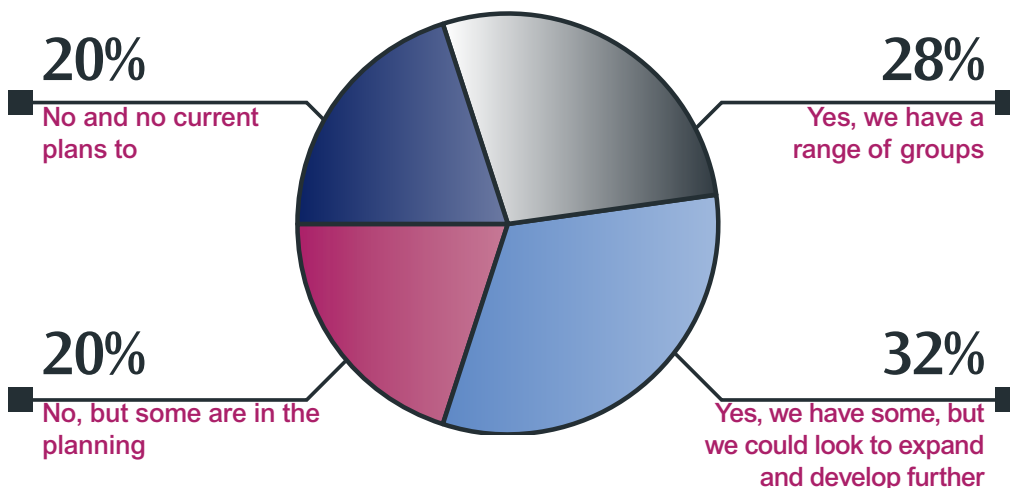
Tracking and developing progress

How does your organisation currently track/measure inclusion?



There continues to be a wide range of approaches used when it comes to tracking and measuring inclusion (or not as the case may be!). A lack of structure or relying solely on anecdotal feedback does not necessarily mean that good things are not happening on the ground. However, those organisations who do implement targeted data and tools will find it far easier to spot trends and measure success. The rising use of tech, people analytics and AI is likely to make structured tracking more prevalent, so it would make sense for most organisations to get ahead of the curve now.

Does your organisation run any special interest groups or employee forums to promote inclusion?



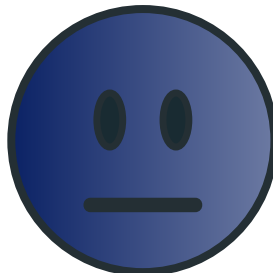
The number of you who are running special interest groups or employee forums to promote inclusion has risen to a welcome 28% and a further increase sees 20% of you now having such groups in the planning. This is an incredibly positive direction of travel – actively engaging with staff is a crucial part of maintaining an inclusive culture. Empowering employees to connect and provide feedback through targeted groups provides an amazing platform for trust and community in the inclusivity journey.

Does your organisation use positive action (e.g. during recruitment or promotion processes) to promote inclusion?



24%

Yes



40%

No, but planning to



36%

No or unsure

Positive action is a practical tool that organisations can use to smooth the path towards greater inclusion, particularly for individuals in underrepresented groups. Interestingly, the number of you saying your organisation is using positive action has fallen to 24% this year (down from 40% last year) which is a shame given the range of ideas and initiatives that are available. However, it is positive to see that there has been an increase to 40% in the number of you overall who have positive action in the planning stages. Examples of positive action which can be considered include targeting job advertisements to specific groups, setting diversity and inclusion metrics at shortlisting stage, running bespoke training and mentoring initiatives and participating in inclusion focused schemes such as Inclusive Employers and Disability Confident. For those of you who are already doing great things on positive action – shout about your successes and share your tips with other organisations!

Action points

Where to start	Where to go next
<p>Assess how you are currently measuring/tracking inclusion within your organisation and gather information about what steps you could take to introduce more structure (e.g. introduce inclusion focused questions in a wider employee engagement survey or project).</p> <p>Canvass views from employees on what employee-led forums or networks may be of value within your organisation. If your organisation is currently too small to run certain groups, consider if you can connect with other employers or resources in your sector to support employees in these areas.</p>	<p>Implement a targeted employee inclusion survey to track data on inclusion from employees and refresh this periodically to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Speak to your leadership team about positive action in recruitment/promotion processes and the steps which may be appropriate for your organisation to implement.</p>

Talk to us!

We'd love to hear your views on this survey and the shape of your organisation's inclusivity journey over the last 12 months. If you need support, we are here to help; our toolkit detailing ways we can help you along the journey is [here](#). You and your colleagues can also add your details to our mailing lists for free content, including employment and pensions updates and invites to our weekly Trowers Tuesday webinars – strength in community is what we are about!

Employer of the Future

The changing nature of the employer and employee relationship

A lot has changed in the workplace. The necessity of finding new, agile ways to work during the pandemic has brought many businesses up to speed with a trend that has been gaining pace for years. A combination of changing generational expectations, innovative technology that can help keep staff engaged and a more informed and assertive approach from employees to inclusivity and sustainability means employers are having to rethink every aspect of how they maintain a forward-thinking organisation.

We have spent the last 12 months sharing our insights and observations about what it takes to truly become an Employer of the Future.

Read some of our recent articles and conversations here:

[Thinking Business: The importance of focussing on your culture](#)

[Trowers Tuesday on demand: summer of inclusivity](#)



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