

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Embedding EDI
into leadership,
people strategy, and
operational practice:
A best practice guide
for Line Managers in the
offshore wind sector

Introduction

As the offshore wind industry expands, so too should the approach to building inclusive, equitable, and diverse workplaces. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) goes beyond moral or legal obligations, it is a strategic enabler for long-term sector sustainability.

As a line manager, you are in a unique position to influence team culture every single day. Whether you are based offshore, on-site, in a hybrid setup, or at the office, how you manage influences the experience of those around you. Inclusion is created through everyday interactions, decisions, and conversations. This guide is designed to help you lead inclusively and confidently, wherever you are working.

Research found that line managers had a big impact on the working experience of individuals, especially when it came to feeling heard, respected, and supported. Where managers were proactive, fair, and open, people said they felt better and were able to perform better. Unsupportive managers, on the other hand, are more likely to be the cause of people leaving a company than the overarching company culture.

Inclusive leadership starts with the example you set. The way you communicate, delegate tasks, and respond to others sends a powerful signal about what is valued in your team. Talking openly and positively about diversity helps normalise these conversations. Acknowledging the strengths that different people bring across gender, ethnicity, background, or thinking style shows your team that inclusion is part of your values, not just a corporate message.

Inclusion happens in the everyday and works best when it is part of the routine. You can embed inclusive thinking into daily team briefings, toolbox talks, or one-to-ones by asking for input from everyone, recognising different viewpoints, and being mindful of whose voices are heard. On offshore or site teams, this might mean adapting communication styles for quieter or newer staff. In office or hybrid settings, it might mean making sure remote workers are included in key conversations and decisions.

You do not need to be an EDI expert to lead inclusively. What matters most is consistency, curiosity, and willingness to notice and interrupt exclusion when it happens. Whilst our full EDI guide offers detailed information, the following toolkit is intended to give you role specific tips that can help guide your inclusive management.

“I’d say it’s very positive and refreshing that my line manager actively talks about diversity in our team meetings.”

– Female, Asian British, Consenting Executive

Inclusive leadership strategies





Leading by example

The tone you set matters. Small things, like language, visibility, and who you listen to, send big signals.

Actions:

- Talk positively about diversity and difference in team meetings.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour or exclusion when it happens.
- Celebrate team members’ unique contributions and perspectives.

When you model inclusive behaviours, others follow suit. This is especially important in male-dominated and high-pressure settings like offshore wind, where outdated norms can linger unless actively challenged.

It is important to link EDI to business performance and safety. In offshore wind, safety and operational effectiveness depend on high performing teams. Diverse and inclusive teams are proven to improve decision making, encourage innovation, and reduce operational risk.

Why this matters:

- Teams that value every member’s input avoid ‘groupthink’ and are more likely to spot emerging risks
- A culture of respect and inclusion supports psychological safety, which is essential for reporting safety concerns or near-misses

Talking point:

“Inclusive teams are not just ‘nice to have’, they are critical for safe, innovative and efficient delivery offshore and on-site’



Inclusion in team culture

Pay attention to the dynamics of your team. Who gets included in informal chats or development opportunities? Are assumptions being made about what someone can or cannot do based on gender, age, or background?

Actions:

- Involve all voices in team decisions, especially quieter ones.
- Rotate opportunities (e.g. leading briefings, taking lead roles).
- Regularly check in with your team on what is working, and what is not.

A psychologically safe team is one where people feel they can be themselves, and speak up without fear. You help create that by responding fairly, listening actively, and valuing what each person brings.

Watch for this: Some people, including women and those from working-class backgrounds, may experience imposter feelings more frequently because of systemic barriers. Your encouragement can help counter this.

Remember overlapping barriers

People do not experience their identity in one dimension at a time. For example, a woman of colour may face both gendered and racialised barriers, and a working-class LGBTQ+ colleague might face additional challenges with confidence, access to networks, or bias. These overlapping experiences can amplify the impact of exclusion — making your role in creating a fair, respectful team culture even more important.

Team formation: look beyond ‘culture fit’

It can be tempting to look for someone who will ‘fit in’ with your existing team culture, but this often reinforces sameness and unintentionally limits diversity. Instead, focus on values alignment and what unique perspectives a person might bring. Ask yourself: “Will this person help us grow, challenge our thinking, or spot gaps we have missed?” Inclusion is built by welcoming difference, not replicating what is already there.

Avoiding EDI as a box ticking exercise:

Staff may worry that EDI is just about looking good or ticking boxes. Address this perception by explaining that real EDI integrates with business goals and benefits the whole team.

Actions:

- Highlight changes that have made a practical difference. For example, adapting communication for neurodivergent colleagues, or rotating tasks to ensure fair development opportunities
- Remind your team that EDI is directly linked to positive outcomes they care about such as fewer accidents, higher morale and more opportunities for everyone’s growth.

Embed EDI authentically:

- Connecting EDI to your team’s daily operations and priorities, integrate inclusion into safety briefings, task delegations, and decision-making, rather than treating it as a separate activity.
- Actively involve your team in EDI initiatives by inviting input, sharing learning, celebrating genuine progress, and encouraging everyone’s responsibility for inclusion.



Supporting individual needs and flexibility

In high-demand environments flexibility can be challenging, but also critical. Team members may have specific needs related to health, disability, neurodivergence, caregiving responsibilities, or religious observance.

Actions:

- Ask team members what helps them work best.
- Offer flexibility where operationally possible.
- Work with HR to make reasonable adjustments when needed.

This could mean more notice for shift changes, adjusting communication formats, or enabling flexible break times. Simply asking, “What do you need to do your best work?” can open the door to better support.



Image courtesy of Equate Scotland



Make meetings and communication accessible

Examples of accessibility usually refer to ramps or software however, it is also about designing meetings and communications so everyone can contribute.

Actions:

- Check physical and digital accessibility (captions, mic, lighting, etc).
- Allow input via chat, email, or anonymous tools.
- Do not require cameras unless essential.
- Record and share clear notes or actions.

Inclusion focuses on designing for difference. Hybrid options work well to accommodate but ensure that you check for ‘visibility’ of those that join online, are they being passed over for tasks because they are missing corridor conversations?



Spotting and preventing exclusion

Exclusion often happens subtly. It is who gets spoken over, who gets access to certain development and training opportunities, who is always passed over for the big project, or is given low-value tasks more often than others.

Actions:

- Look out for who is regularly included or excluded.
- Avoid making assumptions about roles or capability.
- Encourage a team culture where people speak up and support each other.

Your job is not to fix everything alone. It is to notice patterns and shift the dynamics where you can.



Grow as an inclusive leader

Inclusive leadership is not a fixed skillset. It is something you develop.

Actions:

- Stay open to feedback and learning.
- Encourage your team to grow and learn with you.
- Use available resources. Contribute to company data-gathering and encourage your team to do the same, use internal HR support and guidance, keep up to date with evolving company policies, and leverage tools like AI-driven language platforms (e.g., Textio) to check for gender-neutral and bias-free wording in job ads or reviews.
- Engage with training opportunities. Keep yourself and your team’s EDI training up to date by attending refresher sessions, webinars or new modules regularly. EDI standards and best practices change quickly and ongoing learning is essential for effective inclusive leadership.

Share what you are learning. It shows humility, role models growth, and invites others to reflect too.



Influence the system

You see what is and is not working on the ground. That insight is vital to shaping a more inclusive workplace sector-wide. Sharing insights from the front line can make a big difference. Your perspective helps shape better policies and practices

Actions:

- Share observations about structural or recurring issues.
- Offer feedback on policies or practices that do not work on the ground.
- Highlight examples of what is working well in your team.

Line managers are the eyes and the ears of organisational culture. Your perspective shapes how inclusion is embedded across the sector.



Image courtesy of Ørsted

Highlight initiative: job crafting

Job crafting is about shaping roles to better fit people’s strengths, interests, and needs, without changing the core responsibilities. This might mean tweaking tasks, adjusting how work is done, or changing who someone collaborates with. For neurodivergent team members, it can be a powerful way to align the job with their cognitive style, energy levels, or communication preferences. Research found that this made a positive impact to both wellbeing and performance of neurodivergent individuals. Beyond this, job crafting benefits everyone: when people have a say in how they work, they tend to feel more motivated, engaged, and valued. As a line manager, simply asking “What parts of your job do you enjoy most, and least?” can open up opportunities for meaningful, low-cost adjustments that boost performance and wellbeing.

Measuring progress and acting on data:

Embedding EDI into everyday management means making progress visible and accountable. As a line manager, you can help identify where inclusion is working well and where barriers remain by looking at patterns in your team’s participation and feedback. You can do this through qualitative feedback in dialogue with your staff but also quick surveys and feedback forms. You can track representation of who volunteers for high-visibility tasks and participate in safety and discussions or training. You can also set small, realistic targets (such as ‘every team member leads a daily briefing at least once each quarter’) and review progress regularly.

Emphasising measurement helps shift EDI from intention to action and demonstrates that progress is valued at every level.

Navigating resistance to EDI

Change can feel uncomfortable, even when it is positive. It is common for people to have questions, worries, or even scepticism about EDI. Some may fear losing status or opportunities, others may feel unsure about what is expected of them.

As a line manager, your role is not to convince everyone overnight but to create space for open, respectful dialogue. Responding calmly and with curiosity can turn resistance into an opportunity to build understanding and trust.

Scenario-based guidance

“This is reverse discrimination.”

Acknowledge the discomfort, then reframe equity as correcting unequal starting points, not disadvantaging others. Share data on systemic barriers and invite participation in equity work.

“I just do not see the point of all this.”

Use storytelling (e.g. quotes from offshore women or LGBTQ+ employees) to personalise the issue. Link EDI to operational outcomes: safety, absenteeism, retention.

“We do not have time/resources right now.”

Start with one nudge: e.g. build EDI into team meetings or procurement templates. Emphasise that culture change can be incremental but must start somewhere.

It is important to respond with empathy and communicate with clarity. You do not need to have all the answers to acknowledge concerns openly, connect EDI to shared values and business outcomes, and reassure fairness.

Some practical approaches to shifting resistance

Creating space for questions and respectful discussion. This can be done through team meetings or one-to-ones. It will help you understand the root cause of the resistance and sometimes just being heard reduces pushback.

Use examples relevant to your workplace context. For example highlighting how diverse approaches improve problem-solving offshore, or how inclusion supports safety where clear communication is vital.

Spot the difference between scepticism and exclusion. Whilst the former allows for curiosity and healthy debate, it is important to address behaviour that undermines or excludes others.

Encourage peer learning as sometimes hearing from colleagues has more impact than hearing from a manager.

Takeaway for Line Managers

Resistance is part of change. You cannot force people to “believe” in EDI, but you can influence behaviour, create clarity, and ensure your team culture is fair and respectful. Over time, consistent modelling of inclusive behaviour often shifts attitudes more effectively than pressure or confrontation.



Image courtesy of Ocean Winds

Conclusions

You do not have to be perfect, but it is important to be intentional. Viewing inclusion as a mindset, a daily practice, and a way of leading can be helpful.



Image courtesy of RWE

Top five inclusive habits for Line Managers

Use this checklist as a quick reference to build inclusion into your team’s everyday routines.

Action	Details	Your reflection
Lead by example	Talk positively about diversity in meetings, respond to inappropriate behaviour, and celebrate individual contributions.	
Make space for every voice	Invite input from quieter team members, rotate opportunities (e.g. leading briefings), and ensure remote workers are included in decisions.	
Check for fairness	Watch for who gets development opportunities or is excluded from informal networks. Address patterns that disadvantage certain groups.	
Support individual needs	Ask team members what helps them do their best work. Work with HR to make reasonable adjustments where needed	
Keep learning and sharing	Engage in regular EDI training and share what you are learning with your team to role model growth.	

About the authors

A broader collaborative project between the University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University informs this best practice guide.



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With thanks to:

