

Summary: DEI Programme – Leading Inclusive Change: Leadership Presence (Webinar)

Date: 14 January 2026

The session focused on **practical leadership behaviours that support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)**, particularly under pressure.

Key themes and discussion points:

- **Building diverse networks:**
Participants identified building and maintaining diverse professional networks as one of the most challenging aspects of inclusive leadership, especially during high-pressure moments when people revert to familiar habits.
- **The importance of pausing:**
A recurring insight was the value of intentionally pausing before responding or making decisions. This pause allows leaders to reflect, seek different perspectives, and avoid default, non-inclusive reactions.
- **Preparing in advance for inclusion:**
Inclusive practices are easier to apply under stress when they are already embedded in everyday processes, such as inclusive meetings, recruitment panels, and decision-making frameworks.
- **Leadership self-awareness and growth:**
Bernard shared reflections on being introverted and the challenge of visibility and networking. He highlighted tangible actions he is taking, such as attending conferences with colleagues, actively engaging in discussions, asking questions, and joining SME calls to stretch his comfort zone.
- **Actionable inclusive behaviours:**
Facilitators shared examples of inclusive leadership actions, including:
 - Challenging disrespectful behaviour (calling out or calling in appropriately)
 - Being transparent about how and why decisions are made
 - Actively ensuring all voices are heard in meetings
 - Seeking diverse opinions before critical decisions
 - Inviting feedback on the impact of one's words and actions
 - Continuously learning about DEI topics, especially unfamiliar or uncomfortable areas
 - Reviewing and broadening the diversity of trusted advisors and networks
- **Reflection and accountability:**
Participants were encouraged to regularly reflect (weekly or monthly), identify one priority DEI action, and share progress with the group to reinforce learning and accountability.

Programme next steps:

- Next peer review session: **22nd January**
- **Inclusive communication self-led module** now live on the portal (approx. 45 minutes)

- Second round of **executive coaching sessions** scheduled for February

The session closed with encouragement to take one concrete action forward and continue sharing learning and progress within the group.