Allyship Guidelines: checklists and resources

IP Inclusive

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# Best Practices for Supporting Colleagues

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| **Practice** | **Comments and considerations** |
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| **General** |  |
| Support events and initiatives relating to different groups. | * All of the IP Inclusive communities welcome everyone, including allies, to their events. * Participate in events. * Be proactive. |
| Be curious and open to learn. | * Educate yourself on relevant issues and show support to colleagues. * Listen to and learn from others’ experiences and perspectives. * Ask questions rather than presume. * Don’t rely on other to educate you - educate yourself. |
| Be accepting of people’s differences without judgement. |  |
| Be open to challenging your own unconscious biases. | * Be aware that you may apply a stereotype to people of a specific group without even realising it, for example, assuming that a man is insensitive, a blind person is lost, or a parent/carer won’t want to lead a big project. |
| Be open to feedback. |  |
| Consider inclusivity in your day-to-day. | * E.g. meetings, events, emails. |
| Consider the impact of your language. |  |
| Speak up if you see discriminatory behaviour. |  |
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| **IP & ME** |  |
| Support events and initiatives relating to ethnic minority groups. | * IP Inclusive’s IP & ME welcome everyone, including allies, to their events. * Educate yourself on relevant issues and show support to colleagues. * Participate in events. * Be proactive - don’t wait for the ethnic minority group to initiate an activity for an ethnicity-related event. |
| Be open to challenging your own unconscious biases. | * Be aware that you may apply a stereotype to people of a specific group without even realising it, for example, assuming that a blind person is lost. |
| Be curious and open to learn. | * Ask questions rather than presume. * Don’t rely on ethnic minorities to educate everyone; educate yourself. * Check the pronunciation and spelling of colleagues’ names if you’re unsure. |
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| **IP Ability** |  |
| Support events and initiatives relating to carers, disabled people and neurodivergent people. | * IP Inclusive’s IP Ability welcome everyone, including allies, to their events. * Educate yourself on relevant issues and show support to colleagues. |
| Listen to and learn from others’ experiences and perspectives. | * Try and learn about their individual situation or difficulties. * Understand their needs, e.g. they can’t always work standard hours, and keep these needs forefront. * Be there as someone they can talk to - an approachable support. * Show interest. * Bear in mind that they may not require / want anything yet but let them know you are available. * Be curious and open to learning without being overly probing. * A little understanding goes a long way. |
| Support for carers, disabled people and neurodivergent people. | * Understand that everyone has different needs, even those with the same labels/conditions. * Ensure good communication of relevant policies, framework or guidance. * Ensure workplace adjustment processes are robust and easily accessible. * Encourage communication about existing support and how to access additional support. * Encourage managers in supporting carers, disabled people and neurodivergent people and creating an inclusive culture. * Encourage disabled or neurodivergent colleagues or those who are in a caring role to talk to their manager or HR contact if they need any support so that the options available to them can be discussed. * Making sunflower lanyards/badges available for people with invisible disabilities, educating staff about their meaning and normalising their use about the workplace. |
| Support for disabled people. | * Avoid describing events as 'accessible' for wheelchair users when they aren’t. * Help check out event venues, and online event hosting and registration platforms, for people’s accessibility needs – and get input directly from those people. * Provide indications in your corporate comms about the types of support you make available, with appropriate logos and certification marks. |
| Support for neurodivergent people. | * Be aware that neurodivergence (partially undiagnosed) is all around us, and generally be more forgiving of people. * Recognise that everyone with neurodivergent conditions has different traits and needs, even those with the same labels / conditions. * Be receptive, inviting, and tolerant to people who appear antisocial or act in unconventional ways socially. * They might just need a little extra help and prompting but still can contribute and enjoy typical social activities. * If someone tells you that they are neurodivergent, this should be treated as being strictly confidential unless they tell you otherwise. |
| Consider the impact of your language. | * Do not use the terms "confined" to a wheelchair or ‘wheelchair-bound’. For many wheelchair users their wheelchair is the item that frees them from being excluded. * Avoid describing activities/achievements as showing that you are “BRAVE”. |
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| **IPause** |  |
| Support menopause events and initiatives. | * IP Inclusive’s IPause welcome everyone (whether or not they will, have or are experiencing menopause), including allies, to their events. * Educate yourself on relevant issues and show support to colleagues. |
| Listen to and learn from the experiences and perspectives of colleagues. | * Discuss (peri)menopause and its impact on workers and their friends, colleagues and families. |
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| **IP Futures** |  |
| Actively listen to the challenges faced by early-stage professionals. | * Validate their experiences and provide mentorship. |
| Amplify the voices of those in the first six years of their careers. | * Ensure they are included in important discussions and given opportunities to showcase their skills. |
| Offer guidance on career development. | * Share your knowledge. * Provide advice to help them navigate the complexities of the IP profession. * Ensure career development systems are transparent and accessible. |
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| **IP Out** |  |
| Support LGBTQ+ events and initiatives. | * IP Inclusive’s IP Out welcome everyone, including allies, to their events. * Educate yourself on relevant issues and show support to colleagues. * Attend workplace and other external events hosted by groups or organisations representing the LGBTQ+ communities or addressing LGBTQ+ issues. |
| Listen to and learn from others’ experiences and perspectives. | * Be inquisitive and keen to educate yourself without being overly probing. |
| Call out or report discriminatory behaviour when you see it. | * E.g. offensive language used about or against an LGBTQ+ colleague, and/or misgendering. * Alternatively acknowledge the behaviour was unacceptable and offer support to the LGBTQ+ colleague. |
| Be accepting of people’s differences without showing judgement. |  |
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| **Women in IP** |  |
| Support women’s events and initiatives. | * IP Inclusive’s Women in IP welcome everyone, of all genders including men, to their events. * Educate yourself on relevant issues and show support to colleagues. |
| Listen to and learn from women’s experiences and perspectives. |  |
| Be open to feedback. | * Don’t worry if you get things wrong but take the opportunity to learn and grow from it. |
| Speak up if you see discriminatory behaviour. | * We know this can be difficult, but by calling out this behaviour, you show your support. |

# Best Practices for Workplace Culture Checklist

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| **Practice** | **Comments and considerations** |
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| **General** |  |
| Provide training to managers on various inclusivity matters | * Understanding that everyone has different needs. * Relevant workplace policies. * How to support different groups of people appropriately. * Reasonable adjustments that can be offered. |
| Promote openness about and visibility of difference | * Especially modelling difference by those in senior positions. * Provide visual signs of inclusivity (eg. lanyards, posters, badges). |
| Use positive language when talking about difference |  |
| Provide flexible support and encourage people to use it | * How to support different groups of people appropriately. * Reasonable adjustments that can be offered. |
| Ensure no-one is side-lined |  |
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| **IP & ME** |  |
| Dress Code and Appearance | * Flexible dress codes around religious/ethnic related clothing * Halo code to allow for natural hairstyles - <https://halocollective.co.uk/halo-workplace/> |
| Food and Drink | * Provide alternatives e.g. vegetarian, halal, non-alcoholic options. * Ask about what people’s requirements are. * Consider requirements for own eating and cleaning equipment (eg. crockery, cutlery). * Could be part of a wider part of HR ‘personal profiles’ encompassing also medical requirements, as well as requirements related to religion or ethnicity, e.g. gluten-free, lactose intolerant, etc. * The burden should not be on individuals to publicise that they have special needs. * Work with team members to accommodate, and safeguard wellbeing through, periods of fasting. |
| Religion | * Provide space and time for prayer. |
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| **IP Ability** |  |
| Provide training to managers on disability, neurodiversity and carer  inclusivity matters | * Understanding that everyone has different needs, even those with the same labels/conditions. * Relevant workplace policies. * How to support carers, disabled people and neurodivergent people appropriately. * Reasonable adjustments that can be offered. |
| Openness about and visibility of carers, disabled people and neurodivergent people | * Especially modelling difference by those in senior positions. |
| Use positive language when talking about carers, disability and neurodiversity people in the workplace | * Do not use the term "confined" to a wheelchair. For many wheelchair users their wheelchair is the item that frees them from being excluded. * Avoid describing activities/achievements as showing that you are “BRAVE”. |
| Support for carers, disabled people and neurodivergent people | * Ensure good communication of relevant policies, frameworks or guidance. * Ensure workplace adjustment processes are robust and easily accessible. * Encourage communication about existing support and how to access additional support. * Encourage managers in supporting carers, disabled people and neurodivergent people and creating an inclusive culture. * Making sunflower lanyards/badges available for people with invisible disabilities, educating staff about their meaning and normalising their use about the workplace |
| Support for disabled people | * Avoid describing events as 'accessible' for wheelchair users when they aren’t. * Help check out event venues, and online event hosting and registration platforms, for people’s accessibility needs – and get input directly from those people. * Provide indications in your corporate comms about the types of support you make available, with appropriate logos and certification marks. |
| Support for neurodivergent people | * Be aware that neurodivergence (partially undiagnosed) is all around us, and generally be more forgiving of people. * Be receptive, inviting, and tolerant to people who appear antisocial or act in unconventional ways socially. * They might just need a little extra help and prompting but still can contribute and enjoy typical social activities. * If someone tells you that they are neurodivergent, this should be treated as being strictly confidential unless they tell you otherwise. |
|  |  |
| **IPause** |  |
| Put menopause on the agenda | * Discuss (peri)menopause and its effect on workers and their friends, colleagues and families. * Provide training on how to support people experiencing symptoms appropriately and reasonable adjustments that can be offered. |
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| **IP Futures** |  |
| Introduce structured mentorship programs | * Pair senior professionals with early-stage professionals to foster development and support. |
| Encourage open discussions about career progression early on | * Ensure that junior professionals understand available opportunities and pathways within the firm. * Ensure career development systems are transparent and accessible . |
| Ensure that inclusive language and pronoun use are normalised | * Allow young professionals to feel safe and respected in the workplace. |
|  |  |
| **IP Out** |  |
| Use of pronouns in work signatures | * Across the workplace not just on an optional basis. |
| Provide gender-neutral bathrooms | * Actively add a gender-neutral sign/symbol to any disability-friendly bathroom. |
| Active platforming and spotlighting of LGBTQ+ employees during pride month | * E.g. On social media platforms |
| Providing training to managers on LGBTQ+ inclusivity matters | * Including on LGBTQ+ identities and relevant workplace policies |
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| **Women in IP** |  |
| Use inclusive language | * In both internal and external communications, meetings and correspondence. * “Dear Sirs” is outdated. Try to find the person’s name and address them personally, or if not, then you could use “Dear Colleagues”, or “Good morning”, etc. |
| Ensure women aren’t side-lined | * In meetings, aim to ensure that everyone has had the opportunity to speak. If you hear someone speaking over a woman, politely call out this behaviour, perhaps by referring back to what the woman has said. |
| Publish Gender Pay Gap figures | * The median gender pay reflects differences in how much men and women are paid in an organisation regardless of their job titles. * A high gender pay gap can be caused by different factors, such as women occupying fewer highly paid roles than men, the number of female employees or traditional career roles. |

# Workplace Policies Checklist

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| **Policy** | **Comments and considerations** |
| Annual Leave / Time Away from Work | * Separate annual leave, bank holidays, and religious festival allowance. * Flexibility about not requiring everyone to take religious holidays as part of annual leave (e.g. Christmas, Easter). * Instead allowing a swap to a festival date that matters to them, e.g. swap Boxing Day for Chinese New Year. |
| Anti-discrimination, Bullying and Harassment |  |
| Dress Code and Appearance | * Flexible dress codes around religion-/ethnicity-related clothing. * Halo code to allow for natural hairstyles - <https://halocollective.co.uk/halo-workplace/> |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion |  |
| Flexible working | * Flexible working hours. * Flexible place of work. * Make use of a variety of different flexible working options as needs are individual to circumstances, including for example access to time off for emergencies, unpaid leave, special leave, or career breaks. * Take a pragmatic approach. * Benefits everyone and can be hugely supportive and vital to particular groups, including:   + Parents   + Carers   + Disabled people   + People with chronic illness or other health conditions   + People of a range of neurotypes   + Those experiencing (peri)menopause symptoms   + Students pursuing further qualifications or balancing exams with work |
| Gender-neutral language | * Ensure employment contracts and related policies use gender-neutral language including in relation to leave clauses (e.g. parental leave, birth and non-birth parent). * Ensure fair and equal work rights for non-traditional families and traditional families alike (e.g. equivalent leave provisions for adoption and surrogacy as for biological children). |
| Menopause | * Encouraging discussion around menopause. * Supporting colleagues with the impact of (peri)menopause. * Flexible working to allow down time where possible when (peri)menopause symptoms are bad. |
| Neurodiversity |  |
| Prayer and Reflection | * Prayer / meditation / reflection room. |
| Pregnancy and Breastfeeding | * Private space that can be available. |
| Promotion and Professional development | * Support for professional development through training. * Transparent promotion structures. * Fair access to career advancement opportunities for all and particularly early-stage professionals. |
| Recruitment | * Consider using [Rare Recruitment's Contextual Recruitment System](https://www.rarerecruitment.co.uk/) (CRS) |
| Return to work | * Benefit everyone returning to work after an extended period of leave. * For people returning from parental leave, having such a policy in place is important. |
| Service providers | * Choose external counsel and service providers based on their EDI contributions. |
| Trans and Non-Binary Inclusivity /  Transitioning at Work | * If medical-related benefits are offered, workplaces should have easily accessible information as to whether those benefits cover gender transition, and to what extent. * Clear policies on how to update your name and/or gender in the workplace (e.g. with HR, with IT, etc). * Gender transition policy template by the Law Society: <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/LGBT-Lawyers/Tools/Transition-and-change-to-gender-expression-template> |
| Workplace adjustments | * Robust workplace adjustments process. * No one-size-fits-all; employers need to work with the individual to investigate what works for them. * Reasonable adjustments for all. E.g. for autistic people see <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/autism-space/employment/reasonable-adjustments-at-work-autistic-people/> |

Look at what competitors are doing and try to be better!

# External Accreditation Schemes Checklist

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| **Accreditation Scheme** | **Scheme Provider** | **Comments and considerations** |
| Autism Inclusive Employer Award -<https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/autism-training-and-best-practice/autism-accreditation/autism-inclusive-employer-award> | National Autistic Society | Demonstrate your organisation’s commitment to creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere and positively impact the working lives of autistic individuals. |
| Autism Friendly Award - <https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/autism-training-and-best-practice/autism-accreditation/autism-friendly-award> | National Autistic Society | Designed to support customer-facing organisations of all sizes to provide an autism-friendly environment and inclusive customer service. |
| Carer Confident benchmarking scheme - <https://www.employersforcarers.org/carer-confident/> | Employers for Carers | Assists employers to build a supportive and inclusive workplace for staff who are, or will become, carers and to make the most of the talents that carers can bring to the workplace. |
| Charter for Digital Inclusion - <https://digitalpovertyalliance.org/news-updates/sign-our-charter-for-digital-inclusion/> | Digital Poverty Alliance | By signing the Charter, organisations commit to embed digital inclusivity into their daily operations via at least three impactful actions. |
| Disability Confident Employer Scheme - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign> | Department for Work and Pensions | Supports employers to make the most of the talents that disabled people can bring to the workplace. |
| Good Business Charter -<https://goodbusinesscharter.com/> | Good Business Charter | Recognises, champions and encourages responsible business behaviour for the benefit of people and planet with 10 simple-to-follow commitments. |
| IP Inclusive EDI charter - <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/about/our-charter/> | IP Inclusive | A way of confirming your commitment to a more diverse and inclusive IP sector, and to equal opportunities for all who work in it. |
| IP Inclusive Senior Leader’s Pledge - <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/the-ip-inclusive-senior-leaders-pledge/> | IP Inclusive | To help senior professionals provide visible and active leadership on improving diversity and inclusion (D&I) in their organisations. |
| Menopause Workplace Pledge - <https://www.wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/menopause-workplace-pledge/> | Wellbeing of Women | A long-term commitment to changing the culture of your organisation by taking at least one action a year – big or small - in 5 key areas. |
| Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index - <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/build-workplace-works-lgbtq-people/uk-workplace-equality-index> | Stonewall | Benchmarking tool for employers to measure their progress on lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace. |

Look at what competitors are doing and try to be better!

Beware of accreditations that can be bought!

# Awareness and Celebration Occasions

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| --- | --- |
| **Occasion** | **Date** |
| Chinese (Lunar) New Year | January/February |
| LGBT+ History Month | February |
| International Women’s Day | 8 March |
| World Autism Awareness Day /  World Autism Acceptance Week / Month | 2 April /  April |
| World Intellectual Property Day | 26 April |
| World MS Day and MS Awareness Week | 30 May |
| International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) | 17 May |
| Carers Week | June |
| LGBTQ+ Pride Month | June |
| South Asian Heritage Month | July/August |
| Black History Month | October |
| World Mental Health Day | 10 October |
| World Menopause Day | 18 October |
| National Mentoring Day | 27 October |
| Trans Awareness Month | November |
| International Day of Persons with Disabilities | 3 December |

Consider also:

* Other ethnic minority events such as religious festivals (e.g. Diwali, Hanukkah, Ramadan) and months dedicated to certain ethnic groups (e.g. Latin American Heritage Month).
* Other awareness days and weeks for each letter under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. Although there may be too many for an employer to celebrate each individually, colleagues that identify with each label may celebrate them (on social media or otherwise) and it may be desirable for their employer to support such activities. A list can be found here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_LGBT_awareness_periods>.
* Other awareness periods for different types of disability and neurodiversity (e.g. ADHD, Dyslexia, Tourette’s).
* Going to the [IP Inclusive website events page](https://ipinclusive.org.uk/events/) - use the “filter” menu above the calendar to select “awareness days” to see important EDI-related dates.

# Sources of information for allies and/or employers

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| --- | --- |
| **Source** | **Comments** |
| IP Inclusive website and LinkedIn | [Resources](https://ipinclusive.org.uk/resources/)  [Events](https://ipinclusive.org.uk/events/) – past event posts often contain a recording of the event, the slides and/or a written report. |
| IP & ME webpage and LinkedIn |  |
| IPause webpage, LinkedIn and [Resources document](https://ipinclusive.org.uk/resources/menopause-inclusivity/) |  |
| IP Ability webpage, LinkedIn and [Resources document](https://ipinclusive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/IP-Ability-Resources-October-2022.pdf) |  |
| Women in IP webpage, LinkedIn and [‘Quick Wins’ Toolkit](https://ipinclusive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/220210-quick-wins-for-charter-signatories.docx) |  |
| IP Out webpage and LinkedIn |  |
| IP Futures webpage and LinkedIn |  |
| Access to Work scheme - <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work> | Helps disabled people to start or stay in work. |
| Carers UK - <https://www.carersuk.org/> | Highly recommended by a member of the IP Ability committee from personal experience as a brilliant source of information and support. |
| Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA) - <https://www.cipa.org.uk/> | Offer support programs and educational content for early-stage professionals. |
| Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA) - <https://www.citma.org.uk/> | Offer support programs and educational content for early-stage professionals. |
| Inclusive Employers - <https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/> | Certain of their resources, information and comment are available without a paid subscription. |
| Law Society Networks:  Disabled Solicitors Network - <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/disabled-solicitors/>  Ethnic Solicitors Network - <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/ethnic-minority-lawyers/>  Junior Solicitors Network - <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/junior-lawyers/>  LGBTQ+ Solicitors Network - <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/lgbt-lawyers/>  Women Solicitors Network - <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/women-lawyers/> | Various resources available, including policy templates, e.g. Gender transition policy template - <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/LGBT-Lawyers/Tools/Transition-and-change-to-gender-expression-template> |
| National Autistic Society - <https://autism.org.uk/> |  |
| Regional and university EDI groups, e.g. Birmingham Law Society |  |