

IFIP GLOBAL INCLUSION AWARDS 2026



Guidance for Applicants

The Inclusion Awards recognise organisations and individuals who move inclusion forward in meaningful, human centred, and impactful ways. This guidance is designed to help applicants from every sector prepare a strong submission, whether you work in a school, a local government team, a charity, a tech company, a mental health service, or a corporate workplace.

The purpose is simple. We want to understand the story of your work, the depth of your impact, and the values that shaped your decisions.

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1. What We Are Looking For Across All Sectors

We seek clear evidence that your work has created positive change. Change may be small and deep, or broad and far reaching. Both matter.

Depending on your setting, this might include:

If you work with children or young people

- improvements in engagement, attendance, confidence
- safer and calmer learning environments
- stronger relationships between staff and families
- better access to learning for diverse learners

If you work in corporate or workplace settings

- inclusive hiring or progression pathways
- improved wellbeing among employees
- stronger support for neurodivergent or disabled staff
- improvements in workplace culture, trust, and belonging

If you work in tech

- tools that remove barriers
- platforms that strengthen connection and wellbeing
- ethical AI that supports real users
- evidence that your product or programme reaches underserved groups

If you work in public services or community teams

- joined up working across agencies
- early intervention that reduced crisis situations
- relationship building with vulnerable or marginalised communities
- practical improvements noticed by service users

If you work in SEMH or therapeutic settings

- emotional safety and co regulation
- deep relational work with individuals or families
- strong partnership between professionals
- improved stability and wellbeing

Across all of these, we look for work that grows belonging, removes barriers, and strengthens human dignity.

2. We Welcome Hard Data and Soft Data

Hard data is helpful. Examples include:

- attendance
- participation
- retention
- recruitment outcomes
- engagement statistics
- usage data for digital tools
- service uptake

But soft data often tells the true story of culture change.

Soft data can include:

- how people talk about their experience
- an employee describing feeling safe for the first time
- a family saying they now trust the service
- a young person sharing a moment of confidence
- staff describing how supported they feel
- a customer or service user explaining how your tool changed their access
- a team recalling a turning point in their collaboration

Soft data is welcome because it shows the lived reality behind the numbers.

3. Use Any Format That Makes Sense for You

We do not want the application process to be heavy.

You can share your evidence in any form, including:

- a written explanation
- a short video
- an audio message
- a set of photographs
- examples of tools, resources, or communications
- short interviews
- screen recordings or demos
- quotes from employees, clients, students, or families
- simple charts or graphs
- a reflection from a leader or practitioner

Use whatever helps you tell your story clearly.

4. The Heart of a Strong Application: Lived Experience and Real Change

Strong applications show the human experience inside your work.

Whether you are a school, a tech company, a corporate, or a community service, we want to understand:

- the need you saw
- the steps you took
- who was involved
- what changed
- how people felt along the way
- how relationships shifted
- how your approach evolved
- what you learned
- how challenges were handled, not hidden

Honesty is welcome.

Applicants who explain both the effort and the struggle often present the most compelling narrative.

Examples across sectors:

- A classroom that slowly became calmer and kinder
- A corporate team that redesigned its hiring practices after listening to neurodivergent staff
- A tech platform that widened access for people who had been excluded from online learning
- A local authority that rebuilt trust with families after years of tension
- A youth organisation that helped young people regulate emotions and feel safe
- A company that created new pathways for disabled interns
- A multi agency team that found a new rhythm of collaboration

The most powerful applications show people changing over time.

5. Innovation and Moving Inclusion Forward

We value innovation in every form and in every sector. Innovation can be:

- a new digital tool
- a reimagined workplace practice
- a creative way to reach marginalised communities
- a shift in tone between adults and those they support
- a leadership approach that deepened trust
- a new training model shared across a region

- a small idea that had a surprising impact
- a brave decision to work differently

Innovation does not have to be flashy or complex. Some of the most transformative ideas are grounded, kind, and beautifully simple.

6. Influence Beyond Your Immediate Setting

A strong submission often shows reach beyond your own boundaries. This may look different depending on your sector.

In education

- training other schools
- shaping local policy
- modelling approaches others adopt

In corporate

- contributing to wider DEI practice
- sharing tools with partner organisations
- influencing industry standards

In tech

- improving access across whole regions
- developing tools used by multiple institutions
- supporting groups with limited resources

In public services

- bringing agencies together
- influencing decision making
- reaching previously disengaged communities

Not every applicant needs broad reach. A deep local impact is equally valuable.

7. Why There Can Be Multiple Recipients per Award

The Inclusion Awards celebrate excellence across diverse contexts.

There is no single way to achieve inclusion, and excellence can appear in many shapes.

We recognise more than one recipient because:

- contexts differ
- innovation looks different across sectors
- impact can be deep or broad
- several organisations may meet the same high standard
- inclusion is strengthened when we celebrate diversity, not scarcity

We judge submissions against **standards**, not each other.

If several applicants demonstrate the level of impact, integrity, and innovation we are looking for, several can be honoured.

8. The “People of Inclusion” Recognition

Each category includes a space to nominate an individual who has gone above and beyond. This person may be:

In education

- a SENCO
- a teacher, Head of Department, Senior Leader
- a support assistant, Office Staff
- a pastoral leader

In public services

- a youth worker
- a social worker
- a team leader
- a link worker

In corporate settings

- an HR manager
- a DEI lead
- a team member who shaped culture
- a leader who shifted practice

In tech

- a developer
- a designer

- a product manager
- someone who championed accessibility

In SEMH or therapeutic work

- a therapist
- a key worker
- a practitioner who changed a young person's direction

This recognition celebrates the individuals who hold the heart of this work. It shines a light on the people who often work quietly behind the scenes, changing lives one relationship at a time.

9. Final Guidance for a Strong Submission

Keep your voice natural.

Show the real story.

Be honest about challenges.

Share the voices of those you support.

Explain why your work matters to human beings.

Show where inclusion has grown, even in small ways.

Use any format that feels doable.

Remember that we value courage, creativity, reflection, and emotional understanding.

A strong application allows us to feel what it is like to be inside your organisation, your product, your service, your school, or your workplace. It shows the care, integrity, and imagination behind your decisions.

If you demonstrate these qualities, you are already on the path to becoming a recipient of the Inclusion Awards 2026.

Applicant Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare your submission.

It is designed to help you gather the right evidence without making the process heavy or complicated.

1. Understanding Your Story

Before you begin, have you:

- Identified the need or challenge your work responded to
- Described what the situation looked like before you acted
- Gathered voices or reflections from people involved
- Noted the steps you took and why they mattered
- Reflected on what surprised you or shifted along the way

2. Showing Your Impact

Have you included examples of what has changed for the people you serve?

This may include:

Education settings

- Improvements in engagement, regulation, belonging, or confidence
- Stronger relationships between staff and families
- Safer and calmer learning environments

Corporate or workplace settings

- More inclusive hiring and progression pathways
- Improved wellbeing among employees
- Stronger support for neurodivergent or disabled staff
- Clear improvements in workplace culture or belonging

Technology and digital providers

- Evidence that your tool or platform improves access
- Positive impact for users with diverse needs
- Demonstrations of safe, ethical, and supportive design
- Increased participation or engagement for marginalised groups

Public services and community teams

- Better partnership between agencies
- Earlier or more effective intervention
- Improved outcomes for service users and families
- Growth in trust with communities who felt distant or excluded

SEMH and therapeutic settings

- Improved emotional safety and stability
- Co regulation and relational support
- Evidence of wellbeing gains for young people or families

3. Including Hard Data and Soft Data

Have you included:

- Any relevant numbers or statistics
- Soft data such as stories, quotes, reflections, or observations
- Real examples showing how people felt or how relationships changed

4. Choosing Your Evidence Format

You may submit evidence in any form. Have you chosen the formats that work best for you?

- Written summary
- Short video
- Audio recording
- Photographs
- Screenshots or demos
- Feedback from individuals or groups
- Case studies
- Documents or tools you created

There is no required format. Use whatever tells your story clearly.

5. Highlighting Innovation

Have you explained what makes your work innovative?

- A new idea or creative approach
- A simple practice that produced deep impact
- A shift in culture or relationships
- A new way to support access, participation, or belonging
- A tool, model, or process others can learn from

6. Showing Wider Influence

Have you included any examples of influence beyond your immediate setting?

- Shared practice with other organisations
- Training others
- Adoption of your approach by partners
- Community or regional ripple effects
- Policy or system level influence

This is welcome but not required. Small settings can show deep impact without broad reach.

7. Nominating an Individual for the People of Inclusion Award

Each category allows you to nominate someone who has gone above and beyond.

Have you:

- Identified an individual whose actions shaped your work
- Included a short explanation of what they did
- Gathered one or two short statements from others who witnessed their contribution

This might be a teacher, SENCO, social worker, therapist, volunteer, developer, manager, or team member.

8. Keeping Your Submission Clear and Human

Before submitting, check the following:

- The language is natural and honest
- The impact is clearly explained
- The evidence feels authentic, not polished
- You have shown what worked and what was difficult
- The reader can understand why your work matters to real people

9. Final Submission Check

- You have chosen the correct category
- You have included contact information
- You have uploaded all evidence in the formats you prefer
- You have checked that confidential information is removed or anonymised
- You have submitted before the deadline

Entry Fees by Category

Below is the full pricing structure for applicants.

Fees are set to keep the awards accessible for schools and charities while allowing organisations with larger budgets to contribute at an appropriate level.

Entry Fee Table

Category	Who This Covers	Entry Fee
State Schools and Public Sector	State schools, public sector providers, local authority teams, outreach services, PRUs, SEN panels, early help services	£95
Independent and International Schools	Independent schools, international schools, multi school networks, specialist provisions	£195
Corporate and Workplace Inclusion	Corporations, HR and DEI teams, apprenticeship programmes, industry partnerships, workplace inclusion initiatives	£795
Technology and Digital Inclusion	Startups, software companies, AI tools, EdTech platforms, digital inclusion charities, device access programmes	Startups: £295 Mid sized companies: £595 Large tech companies: £1,250
SEMH Providers and Wellbeing Organisations	SEMH schools, therapeutic provisions, mental health charities, youth services, trauma informed projects	£95

Fees are scaled to ensure global accessibility while supporting the operation of the awards.

If your organisation does not clearly fit one category, contact us and we will guide you to the right tier.

Financial hardship discounts for charities and state schools can be considered on request.

Optional Add-on Packages

Add-on	Description	Price
Feedback Report	A written summary from reviewers with strengths and suggested next steps	£95 for schools and charities £295 for tech companies and corporates
Online Profile Feature	Spotlight page on the IFIP website showcasing the applicant's work	£450 for businesses

Inclusion Award Categories

CATEGORY 1: Local Government and Public Sector

1. **Outstanding Local Inclusion Strategy** *Recognises a local government body that has created a clear and effective strategy improving inclusion across schools or services.*
2. **Excellence in Alternative Provision** *Honours provision that has improved engagement, stability, and belonging for children with significant barriers to learning.*
3. **Innovation in PRU Practice** *Celebrates PRUs that have developed relational, restorative, and community connected approaches.*
4. **Early Intervention Impact Award** *Recognises teams who have improved outcomes by offering early, coordinated support.*
5. **Multi Agency Partnership Award** *For teams that have built effective collaboration across health, education, and social care.*
6. **Traveller Community Partnership Award** *For local authorities or services that have built genuine trust and support with Traveller families.*
7. **SEN Panel Excellence** *Recognises SEN panels that demonstrate fairness, communication, and relational decision making.*
8. **Outreach Service of the Year** *For teams offering support that schools describe as steady, practical, and transformative.*
9. **Community Inclusion Award** *Honours local projects that strengthen belonging for vulnerable or marginalised groups.*
10. **People Award: Public Sector Inclusion Champion** *A nominated individual who has gone above and beyond to support children, families, or schools.*

CATEGORY 2: Schools and Education Providers

- **Inclusive School of the Year** *For schools showing steady and meaningful cultural change.*
- **Excellence in SEN Practice** *Recognises high quality provision for children with diverse needs.*
- **Belonging and Community Award** *For schools that families describe as welcoming, patient, and supportive.*
- **Outstanding SENCO Award** *Celebrates SENCOs who bring steady relational leadership to their school.*
- **Pastoral and Wellbeing Leadership Award** *For leaders who have shaped an emotionally intelligent school culture.*
- **Transition Excellence Award** *Recognises careful support through year group or school phase transitions.*
- **Engagement and Participation Award** *For schools that have improved attendance, engagement, and confidence.*

- **Neurodiversity Inclusion Award** *Honours schools that celebrate strengths and support unique learning pathways.*
- **Early Years Inclusion Award** *For early years settings demonstrating nurturing and relational practice.*
- **People Award: Educator of the Year for Inclusion** *A nominated teacher or member of staff who has shown exceptional commitment.*

CATEGORY 3: Corporate and Workplace Inclusion

- **Inclusive Employer of the Year** *Recognises companies creating safe and welcoming workplaces.*
- **Neurodiversity at Work Award** *For organisations that support and celebrate neurodivergent staff.*
- **Inclusive Hiring and Training Award** *For employers who design equitable recruitment and development pathways.*
- **Workplace Belonging Award** *Recognises strong relational cultures within corporate teams.*
- **Corporate Social Impact Award** *For projects that contribute meaningfully to inclusion in education or the community.*
- **Youth Pathways and Apprenticeships Award** *Honours schemes that support young people into employment with care and integrity.*
- **Leadership for Inclusion Award** *Recognises leaders modelling relational, values based approaches.*
- **Industry Innovation Award** *For companies creating new tools or partnerships that advance inclusion.*
- **Community Partnership Award** *For companies that have built sustained work with schools or charities.*
- **People Award: Corporate Inclusion Champion** *A nominated individual who has significantly improved inclusion within their company.*

CATEGORY 4: Technology and Digital Inclusion

- **EdTech for Inclusion Award** *For technology that strengthens learning for diverse learners.*
- **Assistive Technology Innovation Award** *Celebrates tools that meaningfully remove learning barriers.*
- **AI for Learning Access Award** *For ethical AI that expands participation and supports teachers.*
- **Digital Belonging Award** *Honours platforms that improve connection, safety, and wellbeing online.*
- **Online Safety and Protection Award** *Recognises tools helping children navigate the digital world securely.*
- **Digital Inclusion in Low Resource Settings** *For projects improving access where resources are limited.*

- **Teacher Support Technology Award** *For tools that reduce teacher workload and strengthen relational practice.*
- **Technology for SEN Learners Award** *Celebrates platforms that enhance learning for students with SEN.*
- **Digital Wellbeing Programme of the Year** *For initiatives helping children build healthy digital habits.*
- **People Award: Tech Innovator for Inclusion** *A nominated individual who has created or championed inclusive technology.*

CATEGORY 5: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH)

- **SEMH Provision of the Year** *For schools or organisations providing strong relational and therapeutic support.*
- **Trauma Informed Practice Award** *Recognises settings that respond to trauma with sensitivity and understanding.*
- **Community Wellbeing Award** *For projects improving mental health and resilience across a community.*
- **Multi Disciplinary Team Award** *Celebrates coordinated work between therapists, teachers, and family services.*
- **Youth Wellbeing Programme of the Year** *For initiatives strengthening confidence, belonging, and emotional literacy.*
- **Family Support and Engagement Award** *Honours services that build trust and stability with families.*
- **Regulation and Emotional Safety Award** *For settings that help children feel safe and steady in their bodies.*
- **Early Help Excellence Award** *For teams preventing escalation through timely support.*
- **Mental Health Innovation Award** *Recognises new approaches that create lasting impact.*
- **People Award: SEMH Practitioner of the Year** *A nominated individual who demonstrates exceptional skill and care.*

IFIP Global inclusion Awards Judging Criteria - Summary

Purpose of the Awards

The IFIP Inclusion Awards recognise organisations, schools, individuals and technologies that meaningfully improve access, participation, belonging and outcomes for learners or communities.

The awards are not competitive. Any entry that meets the standard is recognised. This makes the criteria especially important because they serve as the quality threshold.

What Award Recipients Must Demonstrate

1. Real Inclusive Impact

Entries must show that they have removed barriers or improved participation, belonging or outcomes for a defined group of people. Impact can be academic, social, emotional, cultural or community-based.

2. Equity and Access

The initiative must serve those who are usually under-represented or excluded. This may involve disability, learning differences, mental health, poverty, language, migration or digital exclusion.

3. Meaningful Voice

People affected by the initiative must have had a genuine say in shaping it. This can include students, families, staff, or community members.

4. Collaboration

Effective partnerships with schools, organisations, parents, NGOs or community groups that strengthen the work.

5. Sustainability

Evidence that the practice is established enough to continue beyond one person or one project cycle.

6. Scalability and Transferability

The work can be adapted in other settings. Tools and approaches are clear enough for others to learn from.

7. Learning and Evaluation

The team can describe how they know it works, based on feedback, data, stories, or evidence of improvement over time.

8. Creativity and Innovation

The approach shows fresh thinking or thoughtful adaptation that directly strengthens inclusion.

9. Alignment with IFIP Values

The work reflects emotional safety, dignity, participation, relationship-centred practice and real human impact.

Eligibility Requirements

To receive an award, all entries must:

- Be implemented in real practice.
- Provide evidence of impact.
- Demonstrate ethical and safe practice.
- Include voices of people with lived experience.
- Be willing to share learning with others.

Documentation Expected From Winners

- Short written case study.
- Examples of impact (data, testimonies, tools, artefacts).
- Consent for IFIP to share the work publicly.
- A statement on how the practice will support the wider global community.