Avanti | Profiles

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT

# Avanti Leadership Behaviours 360

Find your leadership's true north, with the people around you.



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Avanti Change Ltd
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INTRODUCTION

# What this instrument is for

Public service leaders are asked to do more than run good organisations. They hold their values under pressure, work across boundaries that were never designed to join up, lead through constant change and share power with the communities they serve. Doing that well needs a clear sense of direction and a steady footing. Yet leaders rarely get a clear, honest reading of how their leadership is actually experienced by others.

The Avanti Leadership Behaviours 360 offers that reading, in the form of a compass. Eight leadership competences sit at its eight points, arranged on two axes: Direction and Grounding, and Reaching out and Holding together. Each competence is made up of eight specific behaviours. You rate yourself, and colleagues, partners and community representatives rate you, against the same 64 statements on a scale of 1 to 10. At the centre sits the needle, an Emotional Intelligence score built from five factors, which lets the whole compass read true. The difference between your own reading and others' combined view, your declination, is often where the most useful conversations begin.

The instrument is built for senior leaders and leadership teams across public service: councils, health and care, housing and homelessness, mental health, harm reduction, police and fire, the voluntary and community sector, and the partnerships between them. It works equally well for elected members, trustees and non-executives as for executive and professional leaders, and it builds from each leader's compass to a team composite. It describes rather than diagnoses. It is a structured development tool, not a clinical or selection test, and it is always used within a supportive, facilitated conversation.

**A 360 feedback compass that shows how you lead across eight points, from direction to grounding and from reaching out to holding together, as seen by you and by colleagues, partners and communities.**

# Built around values and outcomes

The instrument is built on a simple belief: public service leadership is measured by what changes for people and places, and by the way that change is achieved. That is why values and integrity come first, why accountability is framed around outcomes rather than compliance alone, and why every competence includes a lens on community, lived experience and co-production. Social outcomes and public value run through the statements, not as an add-on, but as the reason the behaviours matter.

The eighth competence makes this explicit. It asks how far leaders involve communities early, reach those who are seldom heard, share power through co-design and co-production, and value lived experience as expertise in its own right. Including partners and community representatives as raters puts that principle into practice: the people your leadership affects help describe it. The result is an instrument that supports people-centred change, grounded in Welsh values of humility, service and dignity that sit at the heart of how Avanti works.

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| | |
|---|---|
| **Values** | Integrity, honesty and the public interest come first. Each instrument asks how people behave when values are tested, not only when they are easy to live. |
| **Social outcomes** | We look past activity and outputs to what actually changes for people and places, and ask leaders to hold themselves to that test. |
| **Community** | Communities are partners in public service, not audiences for it. Every instrument has a view beyond the organisation's own boundary. |
| **Lived experience** | People who use services, and those who have been failed by them, hold expertise that no professional can replace. We treat it as evidence. |
| **Co-production** | Designing and delivering with people, not for them. We use Arnstein's Ladder of Participation to be honest about where practice really sits. |
| **People-centred change** | Change is something people live through. How it is led shapes trust, wellbeing and whether the change lasts. |

OUR APPROACH

# How every Avanti instrument works

The compass describes and never diagnoses: every point is a strength someone brings, different readings are contributions, and public service values, community and lived experience sit at its heart. It is a starting point for growth, helping individuals and teams reach their full potential.

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|---|---|
| **Values-led** | Integrity, the public interest and outcomes for people and places sit at the heart of every instrument. Community, lived experience and co-production are part of what we measure, not an afterthought. |
| **Non-judgemental** | We describe, we never diagnose. There are no good or bad profiles, only different starting points, and every result is offered as a perception to explore. |
| **Difference as a positive** | Different scores, views and styles are contributions. The richest conversations start where people see things differently. |
| **Maximising potential** | We look for what people and teams could become: the strengths to build on, the range not yet used and the contribution others are waiting for. |
| **Individual to system** | Each instrument connects the individual to the team, the organisation and the wider system of partners and communities. |
| **Developmental** | Every result is a starting point for growth and conversation, never a verdict. The instruments are not for selection, pay or performance management. |

### From individual to team, organisation and system

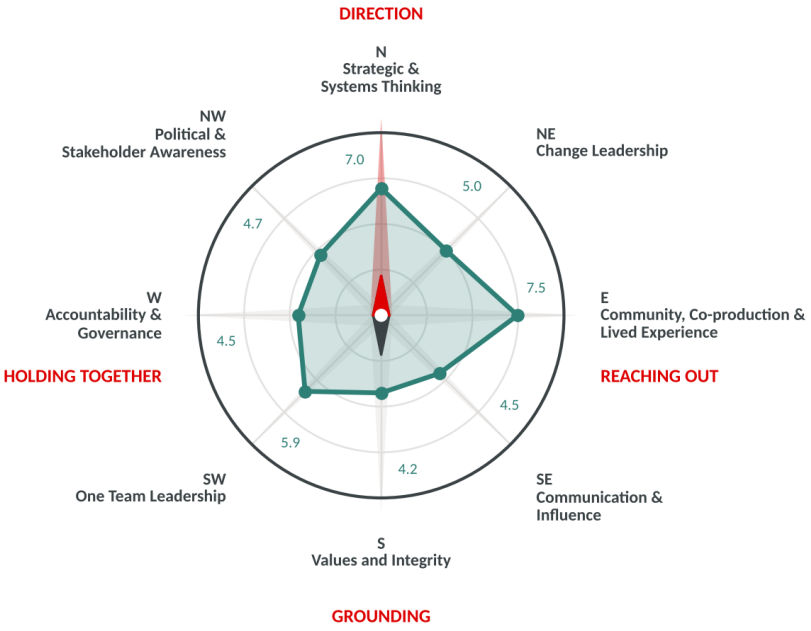
Each leader's compass feeds a team composite compass, which shapes how an organisation leads and how it works with partners and communities across the wider system.

THE METAPHOR

# The Compass

**Eight points and one steady needle: a compass for finding your true north as a public service leader.**

The Leadership Behaviours 360 is built as a compass. Its eight competences sit at the eight points, arranged on two axes: Direction and Grounding, from north to south, and Reaching out and Holding together, from east to west. At the centre is the needle, Emotional Intelligence, which lets the whole compass read true. Your self-rating is your magnetic reading; the combined view of the people around you is true north. The difference between them is your declination, which navigators expect and simply allow for. Read the compass as a whole: every point matters, there is no right shape, and your reading is a starting point for wherever you choose to head next.



| | |
|---|---|
| **Direction and Grounding** | The north to south axis runs from Direction to Grounding: where we are heading, and what keeps us steady. Strategic and Systems Thinking sits at north and Values and Integrity at south. Leadership needs both: a clear heading towards outcomes for people and places, held steady by the values that keep public service trustworthy. |
| **Reaching out and Holding together** | The east to west axis runs from Reaching out to Holding together. Community, Co-production and Lived Experience sits at east, reaching beyond the organisation to the people it serves. Accountability and Governance sits at west, holding the organisation together through clear, fair and open decisions. Strong leadership moves confidently in both directions. |
| **The needle** | At the centre of the compass sits the needle: Emotional Intelligence. It is what lets the compass read true. A steady needle comes from self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social skills and communication, drawn from 32 behaviours across all eight points. When the needle is steady, every other strength is easier to use well, because you can read yourself, read others and respond with care, even under pressure. |
| **Declination** | On a real compass, magnetic north and true north differ, and navigators call the difference declination. They do not treat it as a mistake; they know it and allow for it. In this report, your self-rating is your magnetic reading and the combined view of your raters is true north. The gap between them is your declination. Knowing it helps you set your heading with more confidence, and it shows you where a conversation could be most useful. |

FOUNDATIONS

# Where the thinking comes from

The instrument is Avanti's own design. It is informed by established research and practice, credited below, and by more than two decades of the founders' work with leaders and teams in public service. All questionnaire items are original to Avanti.

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| **Kakabadse: top team leadership** | Professor Andrew Kakabadse's work on top teams shows that the quality of relationships and dialogue at the top of an organisation shapes its performance. Dr. Jonathan Huish's doctoral research at Cranfield applied this thinking to top team leadership in public service, and it informs the One Team Leadership and Political and Stakeholder Awareness competences. |
| **The Seven Principles of Public Life** | The Nolan Principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership underpin the Values and Integrity and Accountability and Governance competences. The instrument treats them as a way of being, expressed in everyday behaviour. |
| **Snowden: the Cynefin framework** | Dave Snowden's Cynefin framework distinguishes clear, complicated, complex and chaotic contexts, each calling for different leadership responses. It informs the instrument's emphasis on deciding well without certainty, sensing the wider system and adapting as situations unfold. |
| **Arnstein: the Ladder of Participation** | Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation describes the difference between token involvement and genuine citizen power. It informs the Community, Co-production and Lived Experience competence, alongside Dr Amanda Milliner's doctoral research at the University of South Wales on community engagement in public services. |
| **Edmondson: psychological safety** | Amy Edmondson's research on psychological safety shows that teams learn and perform better when people feel safe to speak up, question and admit mistakes. It informs the behaviours on ethical safety, openness to challenge and honest communication. |
| **Goleman: emotional intelligence** | Daniel Goleman's work popularised emotional intelligence as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. It informs the cross-cutting Emotional Intelligence score, which draws on behaviours across all eight competences rather than treating it as a separate skill. |

## Design principles

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| **Behaviour, not personality** | Every statement describes something others can observe. The instrument is about what you do, which you can change, not who you are. |
| **One set of statements for everyone** | Statements are written without a subject pronoun so you and your raters respond to exactly the same wording, making comparisons fair and meaningful. |
| **Outcomes for people at the centre** | Behaviours are framed around what changes for people and places, so the instrument rewards leadership that improves lives, not just leadership that manages activity. |
| **Community voice in the feedback** | Partners and community representatives can be invited as a rater group, so the people your leadership is meant to serve can shape your feedback. |
| **Development, not judgement** | Results are used for reflection, coaching and growth. They are never used for selection, appraisal ratings or performance management. |

THE MODEL

# The 8 competences at a glance

| | Competence | In a sentence |
|---|---|---|
| C1 | Values and Integrity | Holding your values steady, in private and in public, under pressure. |
| C2 | Accountability and Governance | Making sound, transparent decisions and following them through, even without certainty. |
| C3 | One Team Leadership | Building trust across boundaries so difference becomes a shared strength. |
| C4 | Strategic and Systems Thinking | Seeing the whole system and setting direction towards outcomes that matter. |
| C5 | Political and Stakeholder Awareness | Navigating democratic, board and partnership politics with skill and integrity. |
| C6 | Communication and Influence | Listening deeply, speaking honestly and influencing through trust, not pressure. |
| C7 | Change Leadership | Leading people through change with purpose, steadiness and care. |
| C8 | Community, Co-production and Lived Experience | Treating communities and lived experience as partners in shaping outcomes. |

## C1 VALUES AND INTEGRITY

Holding your values steady, in private and in public, under pressure.

The Nolan Principles are not a compliance checklist. At their best they are a way of being: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership shown in ordinary decisions as much as in public statements.

This competence describes the leader whose values hold when pressure, convenience or advantage pull the other way. It is not about being perfect. It is about consistency between what you say and what you do, the courage to keep an ethical course when there is no obviously right answer, and the humility to say openly when you have fallen short.

Leaders who live this competence make it safe for others to raise concerns, including concerns about how the organisation itself is behaving.

### Why it matters

Trust between communities and public institutions is fragile, and it is built or lost through the visible conduct of leaders. When values hold under pressure, people inside and outside the organisation can believe what they are told, and decisions are more likely to serve the public rather than the institution.

**Through a values lens:** Integrity is what makes it credible to invite communities and people with lived experience into the room as partners. People will only share power, and their stories, with leaders they trust to act in the public interest.

**When it tips too far:** Strong conviction can feel to others like certainty or judgement, so it helps to stay curious and leave room for them to find the right course themselves.

## C2 ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

Making sound, transparent decisions and following them through, even without certainty.

Good governance is the foundation everything else rests on, and it is hardest to sustain when the picture is uncertain. Sound governance does not require certainty. It requires discipline, transparency and clarity about who is responsible for what.

This competence describes the leader who is decisive without being closed, and transparent without being careless. They reach well-reasoned decisions through proper process when the full picture is not yet available, explain openly how those decisions were made, and hold themselves and others to account for delivery. They are clear about their own role, respect the roles of others, and make sure decision-making draws on a wide range of perspectives, including people who will live with the consequences.

### Why it matters

How decisions are made is itself a form of leadership that staff, partners and communities watch closely. Clear, open and inclusive governance protects public money and public trust, and keeps attention on whether decisions are actually improving outcomes for people.

**Through a values lens:** Inclusive governance means people affected by a decision have a real route into it, not just a consultation after the fact. Accountability that looks at outcomes for people, rather than process compliance alone, is accountability to communities.
**When it tips too far:** A love of good process can slow things down or feel controlling, so it helps to match the level of process to what the decision really needs.

## C3 ONE TEAM LEADERSHIP

Building trust across boundaries so difference becomes a shared strength.

Public service leadership rests on relationships across boundaries: between political and executive leadership, between boards and executive teams, between professions, and between organisations working on the same problems. When those relationships work, almost anything is possible. When they fracture, everything else becomes harder.

This competence describes the leader who actively invests in those relationships. They build trust, respect the distinct roles others play, welcome difference in background and thinking, and stand behind collective decisions. They take time to understand colleagues, respond to challenge with curiosity, address tension early, and treat bringing different cultures together as real leadership work. One Team Leadership is not about uniformity. It creates the conditions in which difference, and Positive Challenge, become strengths.

### Why it matters

The outcomes that matter most to people, in health, housing, safety and wellbeing, rarely sit within one team or organisation. Leaders who can build trust across boundaries make joined-up, people-centred services possible.

**Through a values lens:** Rich Diversity in a leadership team is only valuable if difference is genuinely heard. The same habits of respect that make a team work also make it possible to welcome community partners and people with lived experience as equals.
**When it tips too far:** The wish for harmony can quieten healthy disagreement, so it helps to welcome challenge as part of what keeps a team strong.

## C4 STRATEGIC AND SYSTEMS THINKING

Seeing the whole system and setting direction towards outcomes that matter.

Strategic leadership in complex conditions needs more than a clear vision. It needs systems thinking: understanding how the parts of a complex environment connect, where small changes can make a big difference, and what the unintended consequences of a decision might be.

This competence describes the leader who can step back from day-to-day pressure, make sense of a shifting landscape and help others orientate around a shared direction. They scan the horizon for early signals, keep attention on outcomes for people and places rather than activity alone, and bring fresh thinking to stubborn problems. They think through consequences across the system before acting, and they give a confident sense of direction without pretending the route is fully mapped.

### Why it matters

The challenges public services face, from rising demand to persistent inequality, are system problems that no single organisation can solve. Leaders who think in systems and stay focused on outcomes are far more likely to make changes that last for the people and places they serve.

**Through a values lens:** Communities and people with lived experience often see the system more clearly than those who run it. Strategic thinking is stronger when it starts from what matters to people and places, and draws on that knowledge from the outset.
**When it tips too far:** A compelling big picture can feel distant from day-to-day delivery, so it helps to stay close to the people turning strategy into reality.

## C5 POLITICAL AND STAKEHOLDER AWARENESS

Navigating democratic, board and partnership politics with skill and integrity.

All public service is political with a small p, and much of it is political with a large P. Leaders work within democratic processes, board dynamics, partnership arrangements, regulators, funders and government, each with its own interests, pressures and timetables.

This competence describes the leader who reads that landscape accurately and works within it ethically. They take account of context when deciding how and when to act, build credibility with people across different groups and interests, and take clear positions they can explain honestly. They work to understand what stakeholders need, advance shared outcomes rather than narrow interest, move things forward during uncertainty without misrepresenting what is unresolved, and help colleagues navigate politics without compromising their professional integrity.

### Why it matters

Good ideas stall when leaders misread the politics around them, and trust erodes when politics is navigated by manipulation. Leaders who combine political awareness with integrity can secure the support needed to deliver lasting change for people.

**Through a values lens:** Political awareness includes the politics of power and voice: noticing whose interests usually prevail, and making room for communities and people with lived experience whose voices carry less weight in formal structures.
**When it tips too far:** Political fluency can make it harder for others to read your own view, so it helps to keep your positions clear and visible.

## C6 COMMUNICATION AND INFLUENCE

Listening deeply, speaking honestly and influencing through trust, not pressure.

The quality of listening matters as much as the quality of speaking. Leaders who communicate well in complex conditions make people feel genuinely heard, adapt to different audiences, and explain difficult things with honesty and care.

This competence describes the leader who seeks to understand before trying to persuade, and who builds agreement through evidence, reasoning and relationship rather than position or pressure. They are honest about what is not yet known, because false reassurance erodes trust faster than uncertainty. They create the psychological safety in which people say what they really think, including when that means disagreeing with the person in charge, and they represent the organisation with clarity and integrity.

### Why it matters

In times of change, how leaders communicate shapes whether people engage or withdraw. Honest, accessible and respectful communication builds the trust that staff, partners and communities need in order to work through difficult choices together.

**Through a values lens:** Listening well to communities and people with lived experience means hearing what is said in their terms, not translating it into the organisation's language. Accessible communication is a matter of respect and inclusion, not presentation.
**When it tips too far:** Persuasive skill can crowd out dialogue, so it helps to make sure people feel listened to as well as influenced.

## C7 CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Leading people through change with purpose, steadiness and care.

In public service, change is no longer the exception. It is the normal condition of the work. People are asked to build something new while keeping essential services safe, often without a fully defined destination.

This competence describes the leader who anchors change in a clear purpose and keeps people connected to why it matters for those the organisation serves. They stay steady and constructive through setbacks, make time to help people understand and adapt, and model the behaviours they ask of others. They notice early when change is faltering, protect the quality of everyday services, track ripple effects across the system, and build the confidence of others to lead change themselves. People-centred change treats staff, partners and communities as participants, not recipients.

### Why it matters

Change that ignores its impact on people rarely delivers lasting benefit and often damages trust and services along the way. Leaders who combine purpose with care help organisations change in ways that genuinely improve outcomes for the people they serve.

**Through a values lens:** Change led with people, rather than done to them, draws on the knowledge of staff, communities and people with lived experience about what will actually work. Purpose is strongest when it is defined with those the change is meant to serve.
**When it tips too far:** Enthusiasm for change can outpace people's capacity to absorb it, so it helps to check the pace and protect space for recovery.

## C8 COMMUNITY, CO-PRODUCTION AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

Treating communities and lived experience as partners in shaping outcomes.

Communities are not passive recipients of public services. They are partners with knowledge, assets and a rightful stake in decisions that affect their lives. People with lived experience bring expertise that no professional qualification can replace.

This competence describes the leader who involves people early, before options are fixed, and who actively seeks out those who are seldom heard. They treat engagement as genuine dialogue, share power through co-design and co-production, value lived experience as expertise, and invest in the confidence and resources people need to take part as equals. Drawing on Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, it describes a leader who moves beyond informing and consulting towards real partnership, and who holds the organisation to account for what changes for people as a result.

### Why it matters

Services designed with people work better, waste less and earn more trust than services designed for them. Leaders who share power with communities make outcomes more likely to improve, and help rebuild trust between people and public institutions.

**Through a values lens:** This competence is where values, community and lived experience meet most directly. It asks leaders to give up some control, to recognise expertise in unfamiliar forms, and to measure success by what changes in people's lives.
**When it tips too far:** Enthusiasm for engagement can ask a great deal of the same people, so it helps to share the load, resource partners fairly and show visible change.

USING THE INSTRUMENT

# How it is completed

The questionnaire is completed online, with a paper version available where that suits people better. You complete a self-assessment, and you invite a range of raters: usually your line manager or chair, three to five peers, three to five direct reports, and two to four partners or community representatives. Around eight to fifteen raters in total gives a balanced picture. We recommend at least three raters in any group whose results are shown separately, so that individual responses cannot be identified.

Each person rates the same 64 statements on a scale of 1 to 10. Most people take around 20 to 25 minutes. There is space at the end for brief written comments on strengths and areas for development. The survey is usually open for two to three weeks, and Avanti manages invitations, reminders and confidentiality throughout.

| Rating | What it means |
|---|---|
| 1 | Rarely demonstrated |
| 4 | Sometimes demonstrated |
| 7 | Consistently demonstrated |
| 10 | Consistently and exceptionally demonstrated |

### Instructions given to participants

For each statement, choose the number from 1 to 10 that best reflects how often you see this behaviour in practice, thinking about the last six months rather than one memorable moment. If you are rating yourself, answer as you actually behave, not as you would like to. If you have not had the chance to observe a behaviour, leave it blank rather than guessing.

# How it is scored

Each competence score is the average of its eight statements, on the same 1 to 10 scale. We calculate this separately for your self-rating (your magnetic reading), for each rater group, and for all raters combined (true north). Each point on the compass is then placed in one of three bands: Growing edge (below 5), Established (5 to below 7.5) or Signature strength (7.5 and above). Blank answers are left out of the average rather than counted as low scores.

The needle, your Emotional Intelligence score, is the average of 32 statements drawn from across the eight points and grouped into five factors: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Social Skills and Communication. The report also shows your declination at each point, the difference between your own reading and true north, and highlights your highest rated statements and where rater groups see you differently. As more people use the instrument, comparison norms build up over time, but your report is always about your own compass, not a ranking against others.

| Band | Range | What it signals |
|---|---|---|
| **Growing edge** | 1 to under 5 | These behaviours are already part of your leadership some of the time, and there is real potential to build on them. |
| **Established** | 5 to under 7.5 | These behaviours are a reliable part of how you lead, with room to extend them into new situations and relationships. |
| **Signature strength** | 7.5 to 10 | Others consistently experience these behaviours as a defining part of your leadership. |




# Using the results

Results are shared in a confidential, facilitated feedback conversation with an Avanti coach. Together we look at the overall pattern first: your signature strengths, your growing edges, and where your view of yourself differs from others' views. Those differences are often the most useful part of the report, because they show how your leadership is experienced in different relationships, and where your intentions could become even more visible to others.

From there, the conversation moves to choices. You select two or three areas to focus on, using the reflective questions and development actions in the report, and shape a practical personal development plan. Where a whole leadership team takes part, anonymised team patterns can inform a team development session, helping the team see its collective strengths and the places it sees less clearly and agree how it wants to lead together.

# When to use it

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| **New leadership roles** | Within the first year of a senior appointment, to understand how your leadership is landing and to set development priorities early. |
| **Leadership development programmes** | At the start and end of a programme, to focus learning on real behaviour and to see what has changed. |
| **Periods of significant change** | When an organisation is redesigning services, entering new partnerships or changing how it works, and leaders need to understand how their behaviour supports or hinders that change. |
| **Strengthening political, board and executive relationships** | When elected members, trustees or non-executives and senior officers want to build trust and clarity about how they lead together. |
| **Committing to co-production** | When an organisation wants to put community voice and lived experience at the centre, and leaders want honest feedback on how far their own behaviour reflects that commitment. |

# Ethics and good practice

Taking part is voluntary and based on informed consent. Individual rater responses are confidential: results are only shown for groups of three or more raters, except for the line manager, who is told in advance that their rating will be visible. The individual owns their report and decides who else sees it. Data is held securely, used only for the purpose agreed, and handled in line with UK data protection law, with clear retention periods. The instrument is a development tool. It is not a clinical tool, and it must not be used for recruitment, selection, appraisal ratings, performance management or any decision about a person's employment.

**Please note**

This is a development instrument. It is not a clinical assessment and it is not designed or validated for selection, recruitment, promotion or performance management decisions. Scores describe perceptions at a point in time and are a starting point for conversation, not a verdict.

# Part of the Avanti suite

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| **Avanti Strategic Team Behaviours** | The 360 looks at you as an individual leader. Strategic Team Behaviours looks at how the leadership team works together, so the two combine well when a whole team takes part. |
| **Avanti Cultural Dimensions** | Leadership behaviour both shapes and is shaped by organisational culture. Cultural Dimensions shows the current and aspired culture your behaviours are operating within. |
| **Avanti Leadership Preferences** | Leadership Preferences describes how you prefer to contribute to a team. Used alongside the 360, it helps explain which behaviours come most naturally to you and where you may choose to stretch. |
| **Avanti Development Framework Profile** | The Development Framework Profile looks at leadership development across the organisation and the wider system. The 360 provides individual insight that feeds into that bigger picture. |

# About the authors

## Dr. Jonathan Huish

Jonathan is a founding director of Avanti. His doctorate from Cranfield University studied top team leadership in local government: the conditions under which senior teams become genuinely effective and the things that quietly stop them. He is CIPFA qualified, has coached and mentored for more than twenty years, from first-line supervisors to chief executives, and brings a Tavistock grounding in group relations and reflective practice to how Avanti designs and facilitates its work.

## Dr Amanda Milliner

Amanda is a founding director of Avanti. Her PhD from the University of South Wales studied community engagement in public services: what it takes for engagement to move beyond consultation into genuine co-production and partnership with communities. Her practice spans engagement strategy, leadership development and organisational design, with a particular focus on the relationship between organisational culture and the communities it serves.

## About Avanti

Avanti Change Ltd works with leaders, boards and teams across public services: councils, health and care, housing and homelessness, mental health, harm reduction, emergency services and the voluntary and community sector. Our work is rooted in Welsh values of humility, service and dignity, and in the belief that how change is led matters as much as what changes.

## Let us help your organisation move forwards

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