

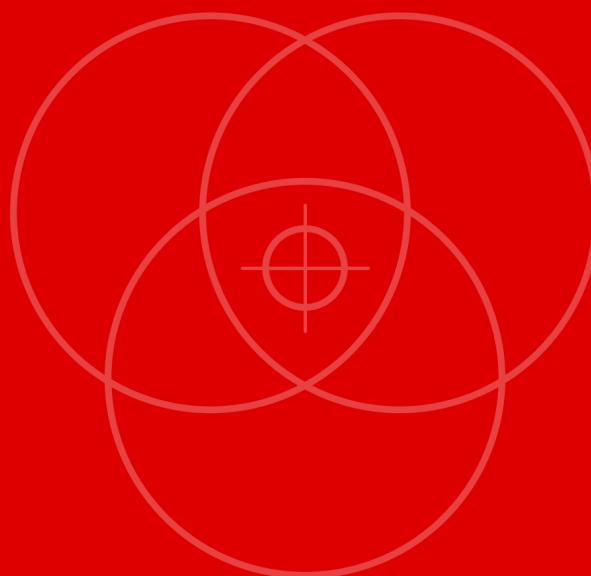


ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT

# Avanti Role Lens

Three lenses, one role, a shared focus.

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## INTRODUCTION

# What this instrument is for

In public service, roles rarely stay still. Budgets shift, partnerships form, services are redesigned, and expectations of a role grow quietly until the person in it is holding something quite different from the job description. Often the role-holder, their line leader and the colleagues around them each carry a slightly different picture of what the role is for. Those differences are natural, and each picture is usually true from where it is seen. Left unspoken, though, they can lead to frustration, duplicated effort and work that falls between roles.

Avanti Role Lens brings those pictures into view. It looks at one role through three lenses: the role-holder's own view, the line leader's view and the views of colleagues who work closely with the role, such as peers, team members and partners. Each person rates how much the role calls for 32 kinds of contribution, grouped into eight role demands, from direction and delivery to community and lived experience. The role-holder also rates where their time and energy currently go. The result shows which demands sit at the core of the role, where the lenses share a focus and where they see the role from different angles.

Role Lens is about the role, never about how well the person performs it. That is what makes it safe and developmental. It is for anyone in a public service role who wants greater clarity: new appointees, leaders in roles that have grown or changed, teams rethinking how they share the work, and boards and executive teams agreeing who holds what. It is a structured development tool, not a clinical or selection test, and it is always used within a supported conversation.

**A role clarity tool that brings one role into focus through three lenses (the role-holder, their line leader and close colleagues) to show what the role calls for, where the pictures line up and where they differ.**

## Built around values and outcomes

Clear roles are a matter of values as well as efficiency. When people know what their role is for, they can give their energy to what matters most for the people and places they serve, and fewer needs fall between roles. That is why Role Lens frames every demand around social outcomes and public value, and why its interpretive text always asks what difference a role makes for people, not just what it produces.

Community and lived experience is one of the eight role demands, so every role is asked how far it is expected to engage, co-produce and hear those seldom heard. Governance and accountability sits alongside it, as a reminder that public service roles answer to the public. Colleagues, including partners who work closely with the role, contribute one of the three lenses, so the picture of a role is shaped by the people it serves and works with. The approach reflects the Welsh values of humility, service and dignity at the heart of how Avanti works.

|                              |                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Values</b>                | 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. |
| <b>Social outcomes</b>       | We look past activity and outputs to what actually changes for people and places, and ask leaders to hold themselves to that test.                         |
| <b>Community</b>             | Communities are partners in public service, not audiences for it. Every instrument has a view beyond the organisation's own boundary.                      |
| <b>Lived experience</b>      | People who use services, and those who have been failed by them, hold expertise that no professional can replace. We treat it as evidence.                 |
| <b>Co-production</b>         | Designing and delivering with people, not for them. We use Arnstein's Ladder of Participation to be honest about where practice really sits.               |
| <b>People-centred change</b> | 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

Role Lens looks at what a role calls for, never at how well a person performs it, so it describes rather than judges. Different pictures of a role are treated as contributions, community and lived experience sit among the role demands themselves, and the aim is a role that helps the person, and those around them, reach their full potential.

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Values-led</b>               | 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. |
| <b>Non-judgemental</b>          | 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.                                              |
| <b>Difference as a positive</b> | Different scores, views and styles are contributions. The richest conversations start where people see things differently.                                                                              |
| <b>Maximising potential</b>     | 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.                                                          |
| <b>Individual to system</b>     | Each instrument connects the individual to the team, the organisation and the wider system of partners and communities.                                                                                 |
| <b>Developmental</b>            | 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

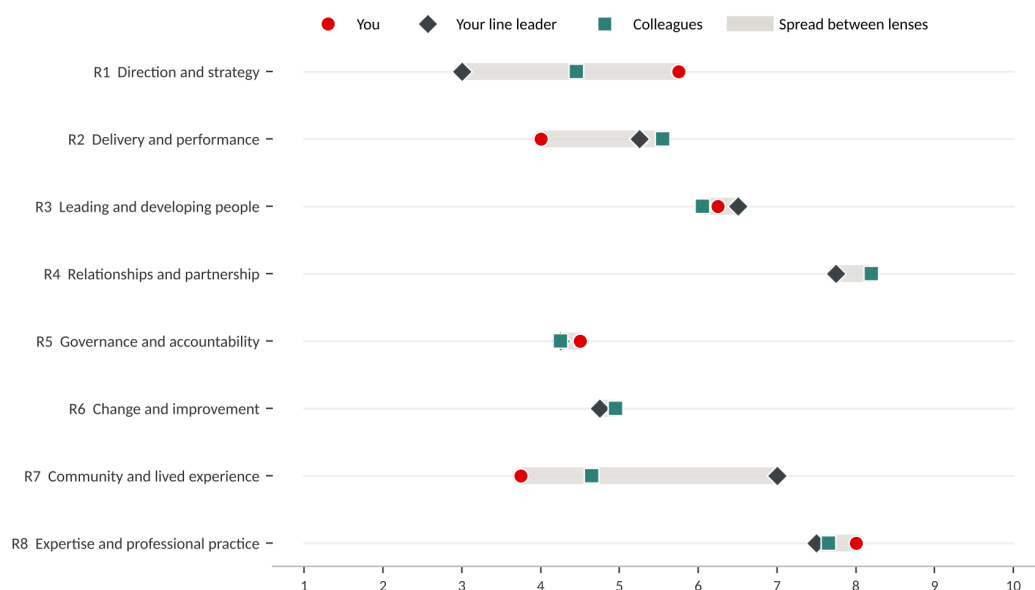
Each role's lens shows how one person's work is understood; set side by side in a team role map, roles show how a team shares its work, where demands fall between roles and how the organisation and its partners connect around the communities they serve.

## THE METAPHOR

# The Lens

**Three lenses on one role: where they line up the role comes into sharp, shared focus, and where they differ each shows something real.**

Avanti Role Lens looks at one role through three lenses: the role-holder's own view, the line leader's view and the views of colleagues who work closely with the role. Each lens has its own angle and depth of field. Where the three line up, the role comes into sharp, shared focus. Where they differ, each lens is picking up a real part of the picture; nothing is out of focus because anyone is wrong. Alongside them sits a fourth view: where the role-holder's time and energy currently go. Read the lenses together, notice where they converge and where they open into a wide angle, and use both as the starting point for a conversation.



The focus scale describes how closely the three lenses agree about how much the role calls for each demand. We measure the spread: the highest of the three lens scores minus the lowest. A spread of up to 1.0 is Shared focus, where the lenses line up and the role is in sharp, shared focus. Above 1.0 and up to 2.0 is Different angles, where the lenses are looking at the same demand from different positions. Above 2.0 is Wide angle, where the pictures differ markedly. The number is always shown alongside the label. A wider spread never means a lens is wrong: each is picking up a real part of the picture, and the spread simply shows where a conversation will do most to bring the role into shared focus.

## 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.

### Katz and Kahn: the role as a set of expectations

Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn described organisational roles as shaped by the expectations of the people around the role-holder, the role set, as well as by the role-holder's own understanding. Role Lens is informed by this idea: it gathers those expectations from three vantage points and brings them into one picture.

### Research on role clarity and role ambiguity

A long tradition of research, including the work of Rizzo, House and Lirtzman on role conflict and ambiguity, links clear and agreed roles with wellbeing, confidence and effectiveness. Role Lens is informed by this work, while remaining a development tool rather than a research measure.

### Wrzesniewski and Dutton: job crafting

Amy Wrzesniewski and Jane Dutton showed that people actively shape their roles, changing their tasks, their relationships and the meaning they find in their work. Role Lens supports crafting a role openly and by agreement, so that what a person brings and what the role needs can grow together.

### Kakabadse: role clarity in top teams

Professor Andrew Kakabadse's research on top teams highlights how clarity about roles and responsibilities at the top shapes the quality of dialogue and performance across an organisation. Dr. Jonathan Huish's doctoral research at Cranfield applied this thinking to top team leadership in public service.

### Avanti's practice

Avanti's work with leaders and teams across public service, together with Dr Amanda Milliner's doctoral research on community engagement in public services, shapes the eight role demands. It is why community and lived experience is a demand in its own right, informed by Arnstein's Ladder of Participation.

## Design principles

### The role, not the person

Every item asks what the role calls for, never how well anyone does it, so the conversation stays safe and constructive.

### Three lenses, one scale

The role-holder, line leader and colleagues rate the same items on the same scale, so their pictures can be compared fairly, with each lens given equal weight.

### Difference as information

Where lenses differ, each is treated as showing a real part of the role. The tool shows where to talk, not who is right.

### Values within the role

Community, lived experience and governance sit among the role demands themselves, so public value is part of what every role is for.

### Focus and time side by side

The role-holder's own time and energy rating sits alongside the consensus, helping people see where their effort goes and agree priorities together.

## THE MODEL

# The 8 role demands at a glance

|    | Role demand                         | In a sentence                                                             |
|----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| R1 | Direction and strategy              | Seeing where the work needs to go, and helping others see it too.         |
| R2 | Delivery and performance            | Making sure the work happens, reliably, for the people who depend on it.  |
| R3 | Leading and developing people       | Helping people do their best work and grow as they do it.                 |
| R4 | Relationships and partnership       | Building the trust across boundaries that public service now depends on.  |
| R5 | Governance and accountability       | Helping decisions be made well, openly and in the public interest.        |
| R6 | Change and improvement              | Making things better for people, and helping others through the change.   |
| R7 | Community and lived experience      | Bringing community voice and lived experience into the heart of the work. |
| R8 | Expertise and professional practice | Bringing the knowledge, skill and judgement that others rely on.          |

## RI DIRECTION AND STRATEGY

Seeing where the work needs to go, and helping others see it too.

Every role in public service carries some share of direction. For some, it is the main event: shaping strategy, reading what is changing in communities and in policy, and deciding where limited time and money will do most good. For others, it is about translating a direction set elsewhere into priorities that make sense on the ground.

This demand asks how much the role is expected to look ahead, make choices and explain the purpose behind them. The three lenses often see it differently, because direction is partly visible in papers and plans and partly carried in everyday conversations about why the work matters.

### Why it matters

When a role's share of direction is clear, people know who is setting the course and who is translating it, and effort lines up behind outcomes that matter for people and places. When it is unclear, strategy can end up held by everyone and by no one.

**Through a values lens:** Direction in public service is strongest when it is shaped with communities, not just for them. A role that sets direction can also open the door to lived experience in deciding what matters most.

**When it tips too far:** Constant attention to the future can leave colleagues unsure what to do today, so it helps to link direction to the next practical step.

## R2 DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE

Making sure the work happens, reliably, for the people who depend on it.

Much of what public service means to people is whether things happen when they should: the repair is done, the appointment is kept, the support arrives. Delivery is the part of a role that turns plans into that experience, through organising people, money and time, and keeping an honest eye on progress.

This demand asks how much the role is expected to own delivery directly. Some roles hold it at the heart of their purpose; others shape the conditions for delivery and rely on colleagues to carry it day to day. The lenses often weigh it differently, because delivery is both highly visible and easy to take for granted.

### Why it matters

People experience public service through what is delivered, and trust is built when commitments are kept. Clarity about who owns delivery, and to what standard, protects both the people who use services and the colleagues who provide them.

**Through a values lens:** Delivery is where values become real for people. Measuring what changes for people and places, not just activity, keeps performance anchored in public value and in what communities say matters to them. **When it tips too far:** A focus on getting things done can crowd out the thinking, listening and relationship work that make delivery last.

## R3 LEADING AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE

Helping people do their best work and grow as they do it.

Every public service depends on the people who provide it. This demand covers the part of a role that creates the conditions for those people to thrive: clear expectations, honest and kind conversations, attention to wellbeing, and the coaching and stretch that help people grow.

Some roles lead large teams; others lead through influence, supervision or mentoring, with no direct reports at all. The question here is how much the role is expected to invest in other people's work and growth. The lenses can differ because people experience this demand most closely, while it is often least visible on paper.

### Why it matters

The way people are led shapes how they treat the people they serve. Clarity about a role's part in leading and developing others helps people know where to turn for support, and protects the time that growing people well requires.

**Through a values lens:** Leading people with dignity, fairness and care mirrors the respect public services aim to show communities. Teams that value different backgrounds, including colleagues with lived experience, bring more understanding into the work.

**When it tips too far:** Care for others can turn into carrying too much for them, so it helps to keep stretching people as well as supporting them.

## R4 RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIP

Building the trust across boundaries that public service now depends on.

Very little that matters in public service can be achieved by one organisation alone. Housing, health, policing, mental health, voluntary groups and communities all hold part of the answer. This demand covers the part of a role that builds and keeps the relationships through which that joined-up work happens.

Some roles are designed around partnership: representing the organisation, brokering agreements and joining up services. Others draw on relationships occasionally, when a specific piece of work needs it. The lenses often differ here, because partnership work happens in many rooms, and each person sees only some of them.

### Why it matters

People do not experience services as organisational boundaries. When roles are clear about their part in partnership, fewer people fall between services, and trust between organisations grows steadily rather than depending on a few individuals.

**Through a values lens:** Genuine partnership shares power and credit. Treating community organisations and people with lived experience as equal partners, rather than as consultees, is part of what this demand asks of a role.

**When it tips too far:** Time spent across boundaries can leave colleagues inside feeling less connected, so it helps to bring what you learn back home.

## R5 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Helping decisions be made well, openly and in the public interest.

Public service is accountable in ways that private organisations rarely are: to elected members, boards, trustees, regulators, funders and, ultimately, the public. This demand covers the part of a role that supports sound decisions, manages risk and assurance, and stays answerable for how public money and authority are used.

In some roles, governance is the core of the work, such as supporting a board or holding a statutory responsibility. In others, it appears in reports, risk registers and the steady discipline of doing things properly. The lenses can differ because governance is both formal and quiet, and much of its value lies in what does not go wrong.

### Why it matters

Good governance protects public trust and helps organisations make decisions that stand up to scrutiny. When roles are clear about their part in it, advice is given at the right time, risks are held by the right people and accountability does not fall between roles.

**Through a values lens:** Accountability in public service is ultimately to people and communities. Openness about decisions, and about what has changed as a result, is part of how organisations show respect for those they serve.

**When it tips too far:** Care about process can slow decisions or read as caution, so it helps to keep the purpose of governance, good outcomes for people, in view.

## R6 CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

Making things better for people, and helping others through the change.

Public services are always changing: new needs, new evidence, tighter budgets and rising expectations. This demand covers the part of a role that leads or supports that change, spots opportunities to improve, tests new ideas and helps people understand and shape what is changing around them.

For some roles, change is the core purpose: leading a programme, redesigning a service or building new ways of working. For others, improvement is a steady thread through everyday work. The lenses often differ, because change is experienced differently by those leading it, those sponsoring it and those living with it.

### Why it matters

Change that is clearly owned is more likely to improve outcomes for people and less likely to exhaust the staff who carry it. Clarity about a role's part in change helps organisations avoid initiatives that start well and fade without an owner.

**Through a values lens:** The best change is shaped with the people it affects, including staff and communities. Treating lived experience as evidence alongside data helps improvement focus on what truly matters to people.

**When it tips too far:** Enthusiasm for the next improvement can leave people tired or unsettled, so it helps to let changes bed in and celebrate what is already working.

## R7 COMMUNITY AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

Bringing community voice and lived experience into the heart of the work.

Public services work best when they are shaped with the people who use them. This demand covers the part of a role that engages directly with communities, co-produces services with people who have lived experience, reaches those who are seldom heard and shows people how their voice has made a difference.

In some roles, this is the core of the work: community development, engagement or peer leadership. In others, it is a thread that runs through decisions, design and delivery. The lenses can differ here, because this work is often relational and local, and its value is felt most by the people outside the organisation.

### Why it matters

When roles are clear about their part in community engagement and co-production, communities are less likely to be consulted late or not at all. Services designed with people, not just for them, tend to fit lives better and earn more trust.

**Through a values lens:** This demand puts lived experience on an equal footing with professional expertise. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is a useful reminder that real involvement moves beyond informing and consulting towards sharing power.

**When it tips too far:** A role can become the only route for community voice, so it helps to build connections that do not depend on you alone.

## R8 EXPERTISE AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Bringing the knowledge, skill and judgement that others rely on.

Many public service roles rest on specialist expertise: clinical, legal, financial, social work, housing, planning, safeguarding, engineering and many more. This demand covers the part of a role that brings professional knowledge and judgement, upholds standards and safe practice, and helps others with the questions only an expert can answer.

In some roles, expertise is the reason the role exists. In others, it is one ingredient among many, especially as people move into broader leadership. The lenses often differ here, because a leader may value the role's breadth while colleagues rely on its depth, or the other way round, and both are part of the picture.

### Why it matters

Expertise keeps services safe, lawful and effective. When roles are clear about the professional contribution expected of them, organisations can draw on specialist judgement at the right moment and avoid both under-using and over-relying on individual experts.

**Through a values lens:** Professional expertise is strongest when it sits alongside lived experience as an equal source of knowledge. The best practice combines specialist judgement with what people know about their own lives. **When it tips too far:** Specialist certainty can leave less room for other kinds of knowledge, so it helps to stay curious about what others, including communities, know.

## USING THE INSTRUMENT

# How it is completed

Role Lens is completed online, with a paper version available where that suits people better. The role-holder completes two ratings of the 32 items: how much the role calls for each, and where their own time and energy currently go. Their line leader rates the role once, and the role-holder invites three to six colleagues who work closely with the role, such as peers, team members and partners, to do the same. We recommend at least three colleagues so that individual responses cannot be identified.

Most people complete their ratings in around 10 to 15 minutes; the role-holder's two ratings take a little longer. There is space for a short comment on what people see as most important in the role. The survey is usually open for one to two weeks, and Avanti manages invitations, reminders and confidentiality throughout. Where a whole team takes part, each member's role is viewed in the same way so that a team role map can be built.

| Rating | What it means            |
|--------|--------------------------|
| 1      | Hardly at all            |
| 4      | From time to time        |
| 7      | Regularly                |
| 10     | At the heart of the role |

### Instructions given to participants

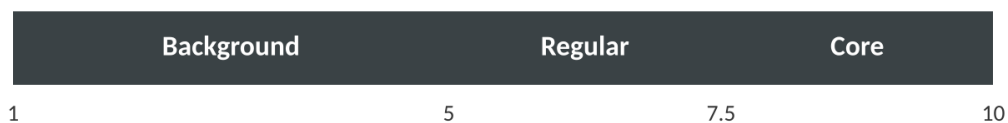
In this role, how much is called for each of the following? Choose the number from 1 to 10 that best reflects how much the role, as it is now, calls for each item. You are rating the role and what it needs, not how well anyone performs it; if you do not know enough about an item to judge, leave it blank.

## How it is scored

For each role demand, we average its four items for each lens: the role-holder, the line leader and the colleagues combined. The consensus view is the average of those three lens scores, so each lens carries equal weight however many colleagues take part. Each demand is then placed in a band on the consensus view: Background (below 5), Regular (5 to below 7.5) or Core (7.5 and above). Blank answers are left out of the average rather than counted as low.

The focus scale shows how closely the lenses agree, using the spread between the highest and lowest of the three lens scores: up to 1.0 is Shared focus, above 1.0 and up to 2.0 is Different angles, and above 2.0 is Wide angle. Finally, the role-holder's current time and energy score is compared with the consensus: more than one point below is Less of your time than the role calls for, within one point either way is In step with the role, and more than one point above is More of your time than the role calls for. There are no good or bad results. Norms build up over use, but each report is about one role, not a comparison with others.

| Band       | Range          | What it signals                                                                                                            |
|------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Background | 1 to under 5   | The role calls for this from time to time: it sits in the background, supporting the core of the role without defining it. |
| Regular    | 5 to under 7.5 | The role calls for this regularly: it is a steady, expected part of how the role contributes.                              |
| Core       | 7.5 to 10      | The three lenses see this at the heart of the role: it is central to what the role is for.                                 |



## Using the results

Results are explored first with the role-holder, in a confidential conversation with an Avanti coach. We start with the shape of the role: which demands sit at its core, which are regular and which sit in the background. We then look at where the lenses share a focus and where they open into a wider angle, and at how the role-holder's current time compares with what the role is seen to call for.

The most valuable step is usually a three-way role conversation, in which the role-holder, their line leader and, where helpful, colleagues talk through the picture together. The aim is a shared, written understanding of the role: its core demands, what it can set aside, and how it might be crafted to make the most of the person's strengths. Where a team takes part, a team role map helps everyone see how roles fit together.

## When to use it

|                                               |                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>New appointments</b>                       | In the first months of a new role, to agree expectations early and build a shared picture with the line leader and colleagues. |
| <b>Roles that have grown or shifted</b>       | When a role has changed through new responsibilities, partnerships or service redesign, and the picture needs refreshing.      |
| <b>Rethinking how a team shares its work</b>  | When a team or organisation is redesigning how work is shared, to see where demands overlap and where they fall between roles. |
| <b>Political, board and executive clarity</b> | When elected members, trustees or non-executives and senior officers want clarity about who holds which responsibilities.      |
| <b>Sustainable roles and wellbeing</b>        | When a role-holder feels pulled in many directions, to agree priorities together and shape a role that is sustainable.         |

## Ethics and good practice

Taking part is voluntary and based on informed consent. Role Lens describes expectations of a role, not a person's performance, and it must not be used for recruitment, selection, appraisal ratings, performance management, job evaluation or grading, or any decision about a person's employment. Colleagues' responses are combined and reported only where at least three colleagues respond; the line leader is told in advance that their view will be visible. The role-holder owns the report and decides, with their coach, how it is shared. Data is held securely, used only for the agreed purpose and handled in line with UK data protection law, with clear retention periods. It is a development tool, not a clinical tool.

### 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

### Avanti Leadership Behaviours 360

The 360 shows how a person's leadership behaviour is experienced by others. Role Lens shows what their role calls for. Together they help a leader see where their strengths meet the role's core demands.

### Avanti Strategic Team Behaviours

Strategic Team Behaviours looks at how a team works together as a whole. Role Lens adds clarity about how roles within the team divide and share the work, which often helps explain patterns in team behaviour.

### Avanti Cultural Dimensions

Cultural Dimensions describes the culture roles operate within, as it is and as people want it to be. Role Lens shows how that culture is expressed in what roles are expected to do, for example how far community voice is built into roles.

### Avanti Leadership Preferences

Leadership Preferences shows where a person naturally starts. Alongside Role Lens, it helps people see where their preferences fit the role's core demands and where crafting the role, or drawing on colleagues, could help.

### Avanti Development Framework Profile

The Development Framework Profile looks at leadership development across an organisation and its wider system. Team role maps from Role Lens show how leadership demands are distributed across roles within that 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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