



ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT

Avanti Team Climate

Read the weather your team works in, then create it together.

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INTRODUCTION

What this instrument is for

Every team works in its own weather. Some days the way ahead is clear, people speak freely, good work is noticed and the pace feels steady. Other days the view is hazy, people keep their heads down and the pressure gathers like a storm. Most teams know this feeling without having words for it. Team climate is that felt sense of what it is like to work here, and it shapes how well people work, how long they stay and what the people they serve experience.

Avanti Team Climate is a structured development tool that helps any team, at any level, read its weather together. It is not only for senior teams: it works equally well for a frontline service team, a project group, a partnership board or an executive team. Every member rates 40 short statements about eight climate elements: Visibility, Shelter, Warmth, Sunshine, Steady breeze, Growing season, Common ground and Horizon. Each person receives a report setting their own reading of the weather alongside the team's combined reading, and the team writes a forecast together: what its climate could feel like in six months if it acts on what it sees.

The instrument draws on Avanti's practice with teams across public services and on the research of Dr. Jonathan Huish (Cranfield University) on top team leadership and Dr Amanda Milliner (University of South Wales) on community engagement in public services. It is built around what matters most in public service: integrity, wellbeing, outcomes for people and places, communities as partners and lived experience as real expertise. It starts from the conditions a team already enjoys, treats every reading as a valuable view from where that person stands, and describes rather than diagnoses. It is not a clinical or selection test, and it does not grade teams against one another.

A strengths-based team survey in which every member reads the climate their team works in, so the team can see its weather clearly and shape it together.

Built around values and outcomes

Avanti Team Climate is built on a simple belief: the climate inside a team shapes what the public experiences outside it. A team where people feel safe, respected and appreciated is better placed to offer the same dignity to people using its services. Integrity sits within Shelter and Visibility; care and respect within Warmth and Sunshine; wellbeing within Steady breeze; and purpose and social outcomes within Horizon.

Community, lived experience and co-production run through the instrument rather than sitting in one corner. Common ground values lived experience as expertise, inside and outside the team. Horizon asks whether communities help shape what success means, in the spirit of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. Throughout, the instrument is people-centred: it treats team members as the experts on their own climate, and it keeps the people and communities the team serves in view as the reason the climate matters.

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

Team Climate reads the weather without judging it: every element starts from what is already good, a lower reading is a place to grow, and every member's view is treated as a valuable reading from where they stand. It keeps integrity, wellbeing and the people and communities the team serves at the centre of the forecast.

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

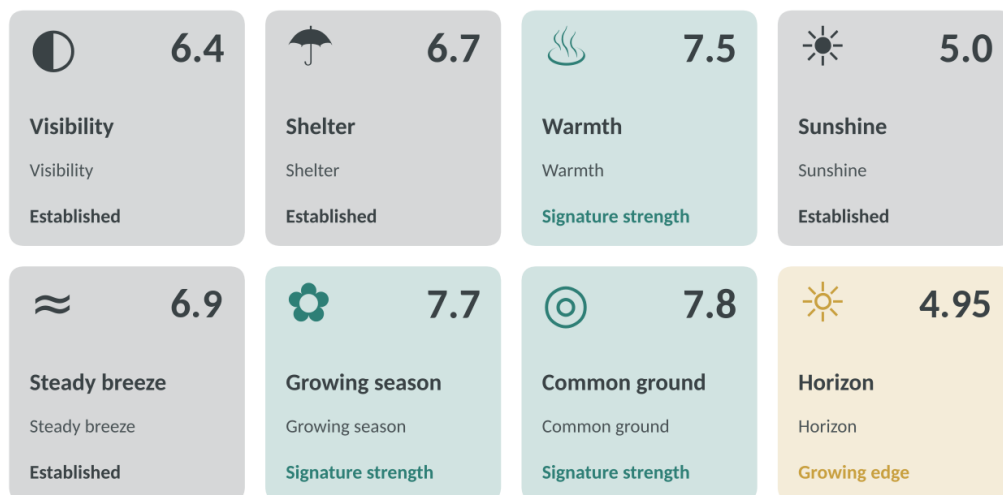
Each person reads the weather from where they stand and the team's combined reading shows its shared climate. Team climates add up to the climate of the wider organisation, and that climate is felt by partners and communities across the system, in every conversation and every service.

THE METAPHOR

The Weather

Every team works in its own weather: it can be read, it changes, and good climate is something a team creates together.

Avanti Team Climate imagines a team's climate as the weather it works in. Eight climate elements, from Visibility and Shelter to Sunshine and Horizon, describe what the working weather feels like day to day. Weather can be read, it shifts with the seasons, and everyone feels it a little differently depending on where they stand: the person by the window and the person by the door will describe the same day in different words. Your report sets your reading of the weather alongside the team's combined reading. A lower reading is not a storm warning about anyone; it is a place where the team can create better weather together, starting from the conditions it already enjoys.



Wales knows a great deal about weather. We read the sky before we set out, we know that a grey morning can turn bright by noon, and we know that good company makes even a wet day feel warmer. A team's climate works in a similar way. It is the felt sense of what it is like to work here: how clear the way ahead is, how safe it feels to speak, how warm and appreciative people are, whether the pace is steady and whether the work connects to people's lives. Unlike the weather outside, a team's climate is not simply something that happens to it. People make it, together, every day, in how they treat one another.

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.

Organisational climate research

The study of organisational climate has a long tradition, from the work of George Litwin and Robert Stringer in the 1960s onwards, exploring how the shared perceptions of people at work relate to motivation and performance. Team Climate draws on this broad tradition of asking members how their working environment feels, while using its own original framework and items.

Edmondson: psychological safety

Amy Edmondson's research on psychological safety shows that teams learn and perform better when members feel safe to speak up, ask questions and admit mistakes. It informs Shelter directly, and the idea that a team's climate shapes how well it learns runs through Growing season.

Research on team trust and recognition

A wide body of research on trust within teams, and on the value of recognition and appreciation at work, points to their role in cooperation, wellbeing and commitment. It informs Warmth and Sunshine, and the instrument's emphasis on small, everyday acts that build both.

Deci and Ryan: self-determination

Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's self-determination theory proposes that people thrive when their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are met. These ideas inform Visibility and Horizon (autonomy and meaning), Growing season (competence) and Warmth and Common ground (relatedness), and the attention to sustainable energy in Steady breeze.

Kakabadse: leadership and teams

Andrew Kakabadse's work on leadership teams shows how much the quality of relationships and dialogue at the top shapes the climate experienced throughout an organisation. It informs the instrument's view that climate is created by people, and that leaders at every level help set the weather.

Avanti practice: Rich Diversity and Positive Challenge

Rich Diversity is Avanti's term for the difference in thinking and experience that strong teams need; Positive Challenge is the practice of turning that difference into constructive conversation. They underpin Common ground and Shelter. The eight climate elements and all questionnaire items are original Avanti work.

Design principles

Any team, any level

The instrument is written for every kind of team, from frontline services to boards. Climate matters wherever people work together, not only at the top.

Every reading counts

Each person reads the weather from where they stand. Individual readings are treated as valuable information, and differences between them are among the most useful parts of the results.

The team and the person

Most statements describe what 'we' do together; some ask how it feels for 'I'. Together they capture both the shared climate and each person's experience of it.

Climate is created, not endured

The instrument treats climate as something a team makes together, through ordinary behaviour. Every result points towards practical things people can do.

Start with the sunshine

Reports begin with what is already good about the team's climate and build from there, treating lower readings as growing edges rather than faults.

THE MODEL

The 8 climate elements at a glance

	Climate element	In a sentence
W1	Visibility	We can all see where we are heading and who does what.
W2	Shelter	It feels safe to speak up, ask questions and learn from mistakes here.
W3	Warmth	We trust, care for and respect one another.
W4	Sunshine	We notice each other's contribution and say thank you.
W5	Steady breeze	We keep a healthy pace, share the load and look after our wellbeing.
W6	Growing season	We make room to learn, develop and try new things.
W7	Common ground	Everyone belongs here, and our differences make us stronger.
W8	Horizon	We can see how our work makes a difference to people and communities.

W1 VISIBILITY

We can all see where we are heading and who does what.

Visibility is the clarity a team shares about its purpose, its priorities and its roles. On a clear day people know what the team is for, which pieces of work come first, and who is picking up what. They can make sensible decisions on their own because they can see how their part fits the whole.

In public services, visibility is easily lost. New demands arrive faster than old ones are finished, partners bring their own priorities, and the reasons behind a change of direction do not always travel. When visibility drops, people work hard but in slightly different directions, and the same task is done twice while another is quietly left.

Visibility does not mean everything is fixed. It means that when things change, the team says so, explains why, and helps everyone see the new road.

Why it matters

Clarity is one of the kindest things a team can offer its members, because it lets effort go where it counts.

When purpose and priorities are visible, services are more consistent for the people using them and less energy is lost to duplication and guesswork.

Through a values lens: Clear priorities are an act of integrity: they show what the team is truly putting first. Sharing that clarity with communities and partners lets them hold the team to it and help shape it.

When it tips too far: A very clear plan can become hard to adjust, and the team may hold to its chosen road a little longer than the changing weather suggests.

W2 SHELTER

It feels safe to speak up, ask questions and learn from mistakes here.

Shelter is what people mean when they say a team feels safe. It is the shared confidence that you can raise a concern, offer a different view, ask a basic question or own up to a mistake, and be met with interest rather than blame. In a sheltered team, problems surface early because people are not afraid to name them.

Public services carry real risk, and that can make teams cautious about what they say aloud. Yet the information that keeps people safe often sits with whoever feels least able to share it: a newer colleague, a frontline worker, someone who sees a pattern others have missed.

Shelter is not the absence of challenge. It is what makes honest challenge possible, because people trust that speaking up will be heard as a contribution.

Why it matters

When people feel safe to speak, teams learn faster, catch risks sooner and make better decisions for the people they serve. When they do not, concerns go underground and the same lessons are learned the hard way, sometimes at a cost to those using the service.

Through a values lens: Shelter is closely tied to integrity: a team where people can tell the truth is a team that can be trusted with the public interest. It also makes room for staff and partners with lived experience to share what they know without feeling exposed.

When it tips too far: A strong wish to keep everyone comfortable can soften the challenge a team needs, so concerns are welcomed but not always followed through.

W3 WARMTH

We trust, care for and respect one another.

Warmth is the trust, care and respect that run between members of a team. In a warm climate people rely on each other to follow through, notice when someone is having a hard time, and speak about colleagues with the same respect whether they are in the room or not.

Warmth is not the same as everyone being friends, and it does not mean avoiding difficult conversations. It is a steady background of goodwill that lets people disagree without damage and ask for help without embarrassment.

In public services, where work can be emotionally demanding and people often carry difficult stories home with them, warmth within the team is part of what keeps people well and keeps them in the work. It is built in small, ordinary moments, and it is felt most clearly when things go wrong.

Why it matters

Trust is what lets a team move quickly, share work and handle setbacks without fracturing. Teams with warmth retain people, support each other through demanding casework and bring the same respect to the people and communities they serve.

Through a values lens: The way a team treats its own members tends to show in how it treats the public. Respect and care inside the team are the foundation for dignity in every interaction with people using services.

When it tips too far: The wish to protect relationships can make it harder to raise difficult issues, so warmth becomes a reason to stay comfortable rather than a base for honest conversation.

W4 SUNSHINE

We notice each other's contribution and say thank you.

Sunshine is the recognition and appreciation that team members give one another. In a sunny climate people notice good work, say thank you specifically and share credit generously. The work that usually goes unseen, such as the careful preparation, the patient phone call or the colleague who quietly covers a gap, is noticed too.

Recognition in public services is often thin on the ground. Success can look like nothing going wrong, and praise from outside is rarer than criticism. That makes the appreciation a team offers its own members especially important.

Sunshine is not about grand awards. It lives in ordinary, specific, sincere moments: 'thank you for how you handled that conversation', or passing on what a resident said about the difference someone made.

Why it matters

People who feel their contribution is seen bring more of themselves to the work and are more likely to stay. Appreciation also helps a team learn, because naming what went well shows everyone what good looks like for the people it serves.

Through a values lens: Recognising contribution is a matter of dignity: everyone's work, whatever their role, deserves to be seen. Passing on appreciation from communities keeps the team connected to the people it serves.

When it tips too far: Praise can become so frequent or general that it loses meaning, or the focus on celebrating can make it harder to talk openly about what needs to improve.

W5 STEADY BREEZE

We keep a healthy pace, share the load and look after our wellbeing.

Steady breeze is about energy, pace and wellbeing. In a team with a steady breeze there is momentum: work moves forward, people feel purposeful and busy periods are handled together. The pace is one people can sustain over months and years, not just in a sprint.

Public services rarely have quiet seasons. Demand rises, deadlines bunch together and some colleagues end up carrying far more than others. Without care, a team can swing between becalmed stretches and storms of pressure that leave people drained.

A steady breeze does not mean easy work. It means the team talks openly about workload, adjusts when the load becomes too heavy, shares the pressure fairly and protects time to recover. It treats wellbeing as part of doing the job well, not as a reward for finishing it.

Why it matters

Sustainable pace protects the people who deliver services and the quality of what they deliver. Teams that look after their energy make better decisions, keep experienced people and stay kinder to the public on difficult days.

Through a values lens: Caring for the wellbeing of those who serve is part of caring for those who are served. A team that respects its own limits is better placed to offer patient, people-centred support to communities.

When it tips too far: A strong wish to protect pace and wellbeing can make the team hesitant to step up when a genuine surge in need calls for extra effort for a while.

W6 GROWING SEASON

We make room to learn, develop and try new things.

Growing season is about learning, development and room to experiment. In a team with a long growing season people have chances to stretch, learn from what they do and try new approaches. Knowledge is shared freely, and new ideas are tested in a small way before anyone decides whether to go further.

In busy public services, learning can feel like a luxury for quieter times that never quite arrive. Yet the services people need are changing, and teams that keep learning are the ones that adapt well. Development is also one of the main reasons people choose to stay.

A growing season depends on the other elements of climate: shelter to try something that might not work, visibility to know what to try it for, and enough of a steady breeze to have time to reflect.

Why it matters

Teams that learn together improve services, adapt to new needs and develop the leaders of the future. Room to grow keeps people motivated and makes better use of the talent and ideas already in the team.

Through a values lens: Learning from people who use services, and from colleagues with lived experience, is some of the most valuable learning a team can do. A growing season makes room for that knowledge to shape how the team works.

When it tips too far: Enthusiasm for new ideas can run ahead of the team's capacity, so experiments multiply before earlier ones have been finished or learned from.

W7 COMMON GROUND

Everyone belongs here, and our differences make us stronger.

Common ground is about inclusion, belonging and valuing difference. In a team with common ground everyone feels they belong and can be themselves at work. Different backgrounds, perspectives, identities and ways of working are seen as strengths, and lived experience is valued as real expertise, whether it sits within the team or among the people it works with.

Avanti calls this Rich Diversity: the difference in thinking and experience that strong teams need. Common ground is what lets that diversity become a strength rather than a source of distance.

Belonging is felt unevenly. Those who resemble the majority may not notice the edges that others feel every day. Common ground grows when a team pays attention to who is speaking and who is not, adjusts how it works so everyone can take part fully, and treats difference as a contribution.

Why it matters

Teams that reflect and include the communities they serve make better decisions and design services that work for more people. When everyone belongs, people bring their full knowledge and experience to the work rather than holding parts of themselves back.

Through a values lens: Common ground is where valuing lived experience and co-production begins: a team that includes its own members fully is better placed to share power with communities and to hear voices that are seldom heard.

When it tips too far: A strong wish for everyone to feel included can lead the team to seek agreement for too long, or to avoid naming differences openly in case they unsettle the common ground.

W8 HORIZON

We can see how our work makes a difference to people and communities.

Horizon is about shared purpose and connection to outcomes. In a team with a clear horizon people can see beyond the next task to the difference the work makes: a family housed, a person supported through a crisis, a neighbourhood safer or more connected. That connection gives everyday work meaning.

Public service is full of purpose, but it can be hard to see from inside a busy week. Targets, systems and processes can fill the view, and the people the work is for can drift out of sight.

A clear horizon is kept clear deliberately. Teams do this by keeping the people they serve at the centre of their conversations, looking at what has changed for people rather than only whether tasks are done, and involving communities in shaping what success means. Where Visibility is about the road ahead, Horizon is about where that road is taking people.

Why it matters

When a team can see the difference its work makes, motivation rises, priorities sharpen and decisions are anchored in what matters for people and places. It is also the strongest protection against work that is busy but does not change lives.

Through a values lens: Horizon is where values and social outcomes meet. Involving communities in defining success, and valuing lived experience in judging it, keeps the team's purpose honest and shared.

When it tips too far: A strong focus on the big picture can make day-to-day detail feel less important, or the team's sense of purpose can make it slower to hear when communities see success differently.

USING THE INSTRUMENT

How it is completed

Every member of the team completes the same 40-item questionnaire, rating how true each statement is of their team now on a scale of 1 to 10. Most people take around 10 to 15 minutes. It can be completed online or on paper, individually and in confidence, usually in the week or two before a facilitated session.

The team can be any group that works together: a frontline or service team, a project or programme team, a partnership group, a board or an executive team. For the combined reading to be meaningful and to protect confidentiality, we recommend a minimum of five respondents. Avanti agrees with the team in advance who will take part and how results will be shared.

Rating	What it means
1	Not true of our team now
4	True at times
7	Mostly true
10	Completely true, even in busy times

Instructions given to participants

Each statement describes something about the climate a team works in. Rate how true it is of your team now, as you experience it from where you stand, not how you would like it to be. Some statements begin 'In this team, I', and for those, simply answer from your own experience.

How it is scored

Each of the eight climate elements has five statements. A person's reading for an element is the average of their five ratings, giving a number between 1 and 10. The team's combined reading for each element is the average of all members' readings, and together these make up the team's weather map. Reports also show how widely readings are spread, because people standing in different places often feel the same weather differently.

Readings fall into three score bands: Growing edge (below 5), Established (5 to below 7.5) and Signature strength (7.5 and above). There is no pass mark and no 'good' or 'bad' climate profile; a lower reading simply marks where the team has the most room to create better weather together. Comparisons with other teams build up as the instrument is used more widely and are offered only as context. Repeating the questionnaire after six to twelve months shows how the weather has changed against the team's forecast.

Band	Range	What it signals
Growing edge	1 to under 5	This element of the climate is felt at times, and it offers the team a clear opportunity to create more of it together.
Established	5 to under 7.5	This element is a recognisable part of the team's climate, felt by most people much of the time, with room to deepen it.
Signature strength	7.5 to 10	This element is a dependable feature of the team's climate that people can feel, count on and build from.



Using the results

Results are explored in a facilitated session with the whole team. Each person first spends time with their own report, noticing where their reading of the weather matches the team's and where it differs. The team then looks at its combined weather map together, starting with the elements that are already strong, then where readings differ most, then where it would most like to create better weather.

The session closes with the team's forecast: a short description of what the climate could feel like in six months, with two or three elements to focus on and a few practical actions each person will take. Many teams repeat the questionnaire after six to twelve months to compare the new reading with their forecast. Avanti can support this through team coaching, facilitated sessions or as part of a wider leadership programme.

When to use it

A new or changing team

When a team forms, gains new members or changes its remit, reading the climate early helps it agree the kind of weather it wants to create.

During demanding service change

When services are being redesigned or demand is rising, the instrument helps a team notice pressure early and protect wellbeing, safety and purpose.

Building a positive culture

As part of wider work on organisational culture, team-by-team readings show how the climate is felt in different parts of the organisation.

Partnership and co-production work

Where teams bring together different organisations, professions and community members, the instrument helps create common ground and a shared horizon.

Checking progress

Repeated after six to twelve months, it shows how the weather has changed and whether the team's forecast is coming true.

Ethics and good practice

Participation is voluntary and based on informed consent. Individual responses are confidential: they are never shown to other team members, line managers or the organisation, and combined results are only reported when at least five people have responded. Data is held securely, used only for the agreed purpose and handled in line with UK GDPR. Team Climate is a development tool, not a clinical or selection test, and results must not be used for recruitment, performance management or disciplinary purposes, or to compare individual managers. Because some items touch on wellbeing and belonging, sessions are facilitated with care, and people are signposted to support if the conversation raises anything personal. Avanti agrees in advance with the team how results will be shared, and with whom, before anyone completes the questionnaire.

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 Strategic Team Behaviours

The Weave looks at how a leadership team behaves together across twelve threads. Team Climate shows the weather those behaviours create, as felt by every member of any team. Used together, they connect what a team does with what it feels like to be part of it.

Avanti Leadership Preferences

Leadership Preferences shows the different pieces each person naturally brings. Set alongside Team Climate, it helps explain why people feel the same weather differently, and how each person's preferences can help create the climate the team wants.

Avanti Leadership Behaviours 360

The Compass shows how a leader's behaviours are experienced by others. Leaders help set the weather for their teams, so the 360 offers a personal view of how one person's leadership contributes to the climate Team Climate reveals.

Avanti Cultural Dimensions

Spectrums explores the culture of the wider organisation, current and aspired. Team Climate shows how that culture is felt in the day-to-day weather of a single team, connecting organisational culture with lived experience at work.

Avanti Role Lens

Role Lens brings a single role into shared focus. Where Team Climate shows hazy Visibility or a gusty pace, Role Lens can help clarify what individual roles call for, so expectations are clearer and the load is shared more fairly.

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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