



**Culture  
Pioneers**  
Awards 2021

# Entry guide 2021

Everything you need to know about entering  
the 2021 Culture Pioneer Awards.

# What is the Culture Pioneers Awards?

HRZone launched the Culture Pioneers initiative last year to showcase the admirable work of people practitioners re-shaping company culture in response to the pandemic.

Following the success of our first year, we have launched an awards programme that will champion those who are people-centric in their approach to culture.

Our mission is to raise the profile of HR and L&D professionals and demonstrate their critical business value through celebrating their culture change successes.

It's important to note that we are not simply interested in the so-called 'best'. We're looking

for inspirational people and organisations that are committed to an ongoing journey to improve their culture.

To support you in submitting a high-quality entry, this guide shares detailed category information, suggestions of evidence to showcase as well as hints and tips from the judges.

We hope you find the guide useful and wish you best of luck with your entry!



**Becky Norman**  
Editor  
HRZone and TrainingZone



## Culture Pioneers Judges

Our judging panel is a talented cohort of industry experts tasked with selecting the finalists and winning entries for each category. These successful Culture Pioneers will be showcased to our community of 159,000 people professionals.

[MEET THE JUDGES](#)

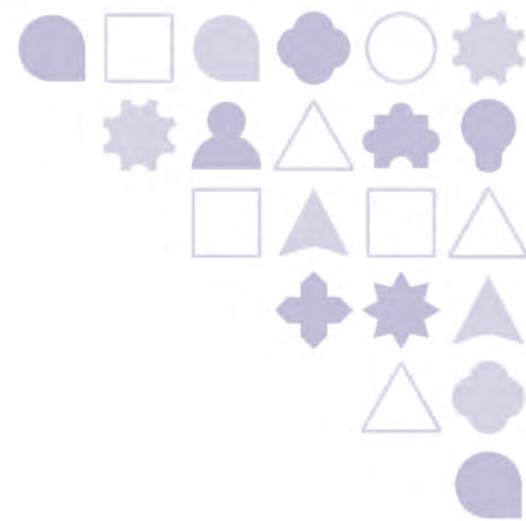




# Key Dates

Save these dates to your calendar to ensure you don't miss the deadline!



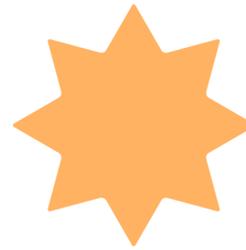


# Categories

Which of our four categories does your organisation excel in?

You and/or your team can enter as many categories as you wish, but the information you provide must be bespoke to each category you enter.

[Read more about our categories on page 6](#)



## Wellbeing

Have you introduced a more holistic approach to wellbeing that has transformed your workplace?



## Learning

Is your team cultivating a culture that proactively supports the way your organisation learns, adapts and grows?



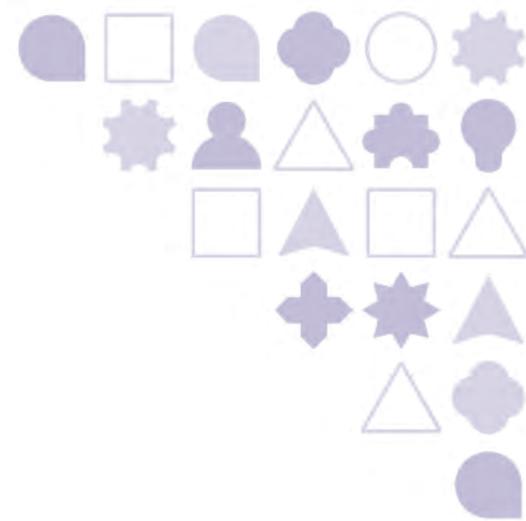
## Inclusion

Have you placed values such as diversity, inclusion and belonging at the heart of your business?



## Innovation

Have you been embracing innovative, potentially unconventional practices to ensure your business and its people continue to thrive?



# Criteria

All applicants should be from UK-based businesses. Both individuals and teams working on culture change can enter the awards (for free). Consultants are excluded from the awards.

To position yourself as a Culture Pioneer, you will be asked to demonstrate a proven change in workplace culture – not simply an introduction of new practices.

To successfully illustrate this, you will need to exhibit specific accomplishments in your individual/team's work across a range of different criteria within the entry form.

## The Why

Tell us about your objectives and vision for driving culture change in your organisation.

## The What

Demonstrate the performance of your culture change activities and how they support the business' objectives / vision.

## The How

Provide evidence of how the culture change activities have positively impacted employees across the organisation.

## The Where

Share organisational results that can be directly or indirectly attributed to the culture change activities.



## Category details

What supporting evidence are we looking for in your entry? We provide some category-specific examples...

Category

# Wellbeing

The Culture Pioneer of Wellbeing Award is for organisations that are consistently evolving their employee wellbeing strategy and taking a holistic approach to support the mental, emotional, financial and social needs of their workforce.

We're looking for people leaders and teams who are fostering an environment that cultivates energy, psychological safety, resilience and adaptability. Entrants for our wellbeing category should consider questions such as:

#### Subjective measures:

- How do employees feel about wellbeing at our organisation?
- Do they believe we care about their welfare?
- Do they feel supported should they face a wellbeing crisis such as problem debt or poor mental health?

#### Objective measures:

- Does our business look at areas such as income protection claims or occupational health data?
- How do we link wellbeing to, for example, voluntary turnover and absence rates?
- Have we secured a wellbeing budget, and how did we prove ROI to obtain the funding we needed for wellbeing efforts?

“Culture Pioneers strive to create ‘human’ organisations. We’re seeking entries from those who are focused on the creation of fresh and empowering cultures.”



**Natasha Wallace,**  
Culture Pioneers Judge

## Ready to start your entry?

Save your progress and return to your entry anytime – but don't forget to submit before the closing deadline 23rd July 2021!

[ENTER NOW](#)

Category

# Learning

The Culture Pioneer of Learning Award is for businesses that are cultivating a culture that proactively supports the way that their organisation learns, adapts and grows.

We're seeking applications from people leaders and teams who can demonstrate the steps they are taking to build business critical skills and capabilities across the organisation. Entrants for our learning category should consider questions such as:

#### Subjective measures:

- Looking beyond our single department, what is the red thread that has pulled this goal together?
- How have senior leaders responded and contributed to the change?
- How have teams and individuals responded to and contributed to the change – including new behaviours?

#### Objective measures:

- Is there any evidence of improved ownership across our organisation?
- Is there any evidence of the impact of change (small or large) e.g. improvements in indicators of psychological safety, engagement, speed of change, leadership systems as well as improvements in important business KPIs (such as customer loyalty or agility in role out of new business models)?

“Culture Pioneers of Learning will show us how to encourage sharing, celebrate learning and break down silos to accelerate the way that individuals, teams and organisations learn together.”



**Laura Overton,**  
Culture Pioneers Judge

## Ready to start your entry?

Save your progress and return to your entry anytime – but don't forget to submit before the closing deadline 23rd July 2021!

[ENTER NOW](#)

Category

# Inclusion

The Culture Pioneer of Inclusion Award is for organisations who are creating meaningful, sustainable improvements in workplace inclusion and belonging.

We're looking for people leaders and teams who are working to create a psychologically safe environment in which every employee feels respected and valued as their authentic self within the business. Entrants for our inclusion category should consider questions such as:

#### Subjective measures:

- Do employees believe they are safe and able to speak up and be heard on matters relating to who they are as individuals?
- Can employees express themselves and feel supported should they face any discrimination in the workplace?
- Are all differences valued and celebrated across all parts of our organisation?
- Is the inclusion strategy visibly owned and championed by our leadership team?

#### Objective measures:

- Does our inclusion strategy impact the workforce, products, services and brand messaging?
- Does our organisation collate data about people demographics across a range of intersectionalities to establish a baseline?
- Do we report on any disproportionately experienced across all employee touch points?
- Do we report on how the organisation benchmarks and compares with its industry?
- Have we secured a diversity and inclusion budget, and how did we prove ROI to obtain this funding?

“For the inclusion category, we are looking for entrants with a real passion for all things to do with equality, diversity and inclusion, that serves as their driving force to make change.”



**Mac Alonge,**  
Culture Pioneers Judge

## Ready to start your entry?

Save your progress and return to your entry anytime – but don't forget to submit before the closing deadline 23rd July 2021!

[ENTER NOW](#)

Category

# Innovation

The Culture Pioneer of Innovation Award is for companies that are embracing innovative, potentially unconventional practices to ensure the business and its people continue to thrive, particularly in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Innovation and invention are oft used words and, in reality, a little misunderstood. For the avoidance of doubt, we see invention as creating something materially new and innovation as how something has a novel, material impact. We're inviting people leaders and teams to apply if they have been delivering business value and tackling some of HR's big-ticket issues in innovative ways. Entrants for our innovation category should consider questions such as:

#### Subjective measures:

- What is the general feel and sentiment people have about innovation in our organisation?
- How would people describe how they find the space, inclination and encouragement around innovation practices?
- What level of innovation scope is afforded to people to innovate (a) their own roles, (b) in their teams and (c) more widely at an organisational level?

#### Objective measures:

- How do we capture, shape and assure any innovation projects, initiatives and activities?
- How do we measure the success of innovation practices and programmes at all levels?
- What value, impact and benefits have been delivered through innovation projects and initiatives?

“How much of what you’ve done is inventive, and how innovative have you been in delivering value? We want to see rule-challenging, orthodoxy-exploding, evidence-revealing exploits that deserve the label innovation.”



**Perry Timms,**  
Culture Pioneers Judge

## Ready to start your entry?

Save your progress and return to your entry anytime – but don't forget to submit before the closing deadline 23rd July 2021!

[ENTER NOW](#)

# Entry hints and tips

Bringing your culture change story to life can be tough. With this in mind, Culture Pioneers judge Laura Overton provides key pointers on what we're interested in hearing about.

The Culture Pioneers Awards is about celebrating those individuals and teams who are building a more people-centric culture. This means we are not simply looking for entrants to share the success of a single initiative. We want to see how a multitude of actions contributed to a more widespread change.

The awards programme is also not about celebrating 'best in show'. We are looking for ideas, strategies and programmes that have created meaningful, measurable change –

no matter how big or small. We want to hear about the activities that have led to results that matter, for the people that matter.

With something as ethereal as culture change, it can be tricky to clearly demonstrate a positive impact from your activities. To help you craft your story, I've outlined a few points we encourage you to explore within your entry.

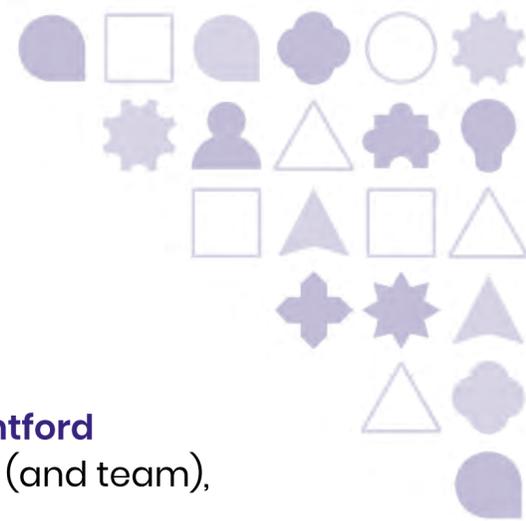


**Laura Overton,**

Author, facilitator & award winning analyst | learning changemaker | Cofounder of Emerging Stronger

## Share how your organisation is:

- Going beyond a vision, an initiative or a bold statement of intent to demonstrate a holistic approach to culture and culture change.
- Pulling together multiple stakeholders to achieve a common goal.
- Committed to people, through its approach towards flexibility, transparency, development and opportunity.
- Exploring culture as a means of achieving mutual benefit, balancing the needs of organisational outputs and individual contribution.
- Genuinely open to honest feedback and acts on it.
- Creating frameworks and opportunities for culture to be modelled and practiced.
- Creatively exploring culture change to achieve its goals.



# Meet the Culture Pioneers of 2020

In the initiative's first year, we received over 50 submissions from organisations across a wide range of industries – including food production, hospitality, construction, technology and the charity sector. Explore these successful stories to better understand what our judges will be looking for from this year's entrants.



**Emma Govus**  
Global Benefits Manager (and team), AVEVA Group  
[Read story](#)



**Linda Mountford**  
HR Director (and team), John West  
[Read story](#)



**Laura Smith**  
Head of Talent (and team), The Brain Tumour Charity  
[Read story](#)



**Elizabeth Hardwick-Smith**  
HR and Training Director (and team), Pick Everard  
[Read story](#)



**Adam Harwood**  
Head of L&D, D&D London  
[Read story](#)



**Kevin Hollingworth**  
Head of People and Engagement (and team) PerfectHome  
[Read story](#)



**Cheryl Allen**  
HR Director of Culture &  
Transformation (and team),  
Atos IT Services  
[Read story](#)



**Gareth Jones**  
CEO, Headstart  
[Read story](#)



**Gemma Shambler**  
Head of People  
The Happiness Index  
[Read story](#)



**Marie Krebs**  
People Operations Manager,  
Learnerbly  
[Read story](#)



**Natasha Wallace**  
Chief Consciousness Officer  
(and team), Clear Review  
[Read story](#)

Deadline

**Entries close  
on 23rd July  
2021**

Get started on your entry today! You can save your progress and return to your application anytime.

**ENTER NOW**



**Culture  
Pioneers**  
Awards 2021

**Celebrating the  
heroes of culture  
change**

[www.culture-pioneers.com](http://www.culture-pioneers.com)