



CultureMark™ Fact Sheet: Your Guide to a Trusted Workplace Certification



Introduction: The Mark of Trusted Culture™

CultureMark™ is the UK's first independent certification specifically designed to objectively verify and elevate psychological safety and cultural maturity within organisations. It serves as your definitive standard for a truly trusted, inclusive, and high-performing workplace. This proprietary, high-prestige standard signals to employees, partners, and stakeholders that an organisation has a "trusted culture" with robust practices in place, proving its culture credentials.

By attaining CultureMark™ certification, organisations demonstrate that they effectively manage mental health risks and foster a positive work environment, yielding tangible benefits such as higher employee engagement, innovation, productivity, and improved retention. In an era when well-being and trust are paramount, CultureMark™ offers an authoritative certification to provide brand value through a respected "kite-mark" of excellence.

The Five Core Foundations of CultureMark™: Building a Resilient Workplace

CultureMark™ assesses organisations against five core foundations, each representing a critical aspect of organisational culture and psychosocial safety. These foundations are grounded in ISO 45003's guidance but extend into broader cultural maturity and practical application. Each foundation has defined criteria and evidences that an organisation must meet.

Here are the detailed insights into each Foundation:

- **1. Leadership Behaviour & Commitment:** Evaluates senior leadership's visible commitment to psychological safety and well-being. This includes leaders' behaviours (e.g., respect, openness), the tone they set, and the resources they allocate to create a safe culture. It assesses whether management demonstrates accountability for cultural health and regularly reviews culture metrics. Leadership buy-in is crucial, as commitment from senior leaders and managers is necessary for any psychosocial risk programme to succeed. CultureMark™ looks for leadership that actively models safe behaviours, champions mental health initiatives, and integrates psychological safety into core values.

- **2. Psychosocial Risk Governance:** Examines the structures and processes in place to identify, assess, and mitigate psychosocial hazards (work-related stressors, bullying, workload issues, etc.). This foundation assesses policies (like those aligned to ISO 45003/45001), risk assessments and controls, and whether there is board-level oversight of psychosocial risks. It looks at objectives and action plans to address these risks and promote well-being (e.g., measurable well-being goals). Robust governance and risk management ensure that psychological hazards are managed like any other business risk. CultureMark™ expects organisations to have a clear governance framework, such as designated mental well-being champions or committees, integration of psychosocial risk into health & safety management systems, and regular reporting to leadership on culture indicators.
- **3. Employee Engagement & Voice:** Assesses how the organisation involves employees in building and sustaining a positive culture. This covers team consultation, participation and communication – for example, regular staff surveys on safety culture, open feedback channels, and mechanisms for employees to report psychosocial issues without fear. It examines whether employees feel safe to speak up (“psychological safety” in teams) and whether their input leads to action. A truly safe culture is one where consultation and participation are standard. CultureMark™ looks for strong evidence of employee voice: focus groups, joint management-worker committees on well-being, transparent communications about culture initiatives, and that employees at all levels are engaged in co-creating a safer workplace.
- **4. Support & Well-being Resources:** Evaluates the practical support systems and resources provided to maintain psychological health. This includes employee assistance programmes (EAPs), mental health first aiders, training on resilience or anti-bullying, and support for work-life balance. It also reviews preventative measures (like workload management, job design, flexible working options) and how incidents (e.g., a stress-related illness or a harassment complaint) are handled. Beyond policies, CultureMark™ rewards organisations that invest in tangible support for employee well-being. This foundation ensures that in addition to eliminating hazards and reducing risks, the organisation actively promotes well-being. High scores are given to organisations with comprehensive well-being programmes, readily available counselling or occupational health resources, and a culture of proactively caring for people.
- **5. Continuous Improvement & Cultural Maturity:** Examines how the organisation measures, learns and improves its culture over time. A CultureMark™ assessment doesn’t end at a snapshot; it gauges cultural maturity, i.e., how embedded and sustained the values of trust and safety are. Criteria include use of metrics (e.g., psychological safety indices, turnover/absence data), regular culture audits or reviews, learning from incidents or feedback, and iterative improvements. It also looks at how well psychological safety is integrated into all management processes (e.g., onboarding, project planning, change management). A mature culture requires ongoing effort, as developing cultural maturity takes time and is an iterative journey. This foundation pushes organisations to not just implement once, but to maintain an “operational framework” for psychological well-being.

CultureMark™ Certification Levels: Criteria & Eligibility

CultureMark™ offers tiered certification levels to recognise different degrees of excellence, each with its own eligibility criteria and scoring threshold. This incentivises continuous improvement, allowing organisations to strive to climb from Certified to Elite over time. CultureMark™ uses a balanced scorecard approach, with defined criteria and scoring for each foundation.

- **CultureMark™ Certified:** This is the base certification level, indicating that an organisation meets all core requirements of the CultureMark™ standard. It typically requires achieving at least a satisfactory score (e.g., ≥ 60% of total points) overall, and meeting minimum standards in each Foundation. All mandatory criteria must be fulfilled. Certified organisations have solid foundations of psychosocial risk management and a positive culture, comparable to having effectively implemented ISO 45003's guidance.
- **CultureMark™ Verified:** This mid-tier level denotes an organisation that not only meets the core standard but exceeds it in several areas. "Verified" status is a mark of advanced practice and consistent positive results. It requires a higher scoring threshold (e.g., ≥ 75-80% overall), with strong performance in key Foundations like Leadership and Engagement. Organisations might need to show proactive initiatives and verified improvements (e.g., year-on-year reduction in stress-related absence, high employee survey scores). Achieving Verified means the organisation's culture has been rigorously validated by Fortis & Noble's assessors as high-performing.
- **CultureMark™ Elite:** This is the pinnacle certification, awarded to organisations that are exemplars of cultural excellence. Elite organisations serve as role models in their industry for psychological safety and workplace well-being. It requires a very high score (e.g., ≥ 90%) across the board, with no Foundation scoring below a set high threshold (for example, all Foundations above 80%). The assessment for Elite is stringent: the organisation must provide evidence of innovative best practices, sustained superior outcomes, and a truly ingrained culture of trust. Elite certification is rare and prestigious – it signals that the organisation doesn't just follow the standard, but sets the standard.

How CultureMark™ Goes Beyond ISO 45003

While ISO 45003 provides excellent guidelines (e.g., leadership, worker participation, hazard controls), CultureMark™ translates these into a certifiable standard with a broader cultural lens.

- **Certifiable Standard:** Unlike ISO 45003 (which is a guidance-only standard, non-certifiable), CultureMark™ has clear requirements and scoring for each foundation.
- **Practical Application & Behavioural Evidence:** It emphasises practical application – not just having policies, but seeing behavioural evidence of trust and safety.
- **Measures Cultural Maturity & Outcomes:** CultureMark™ explicitly measures cultural maturity and outcomes, offering a prestige certification mark that signals excellence. In sum, it builds on ISO 45003's content but adds rigorous assessment and brand recognition.

The CultureMark™ Certification Journey (Brief Overview)

The journey is consultative and thorough, ensuring the client is guided from initial interest through to successful certification and beyond. The key process stages include:

- **Discovery & Scoping:** Understanding goals, context, and defining certification scope.
- **Assessment Planning:** Drawing up a detailed audit plan, including dates and evidence preparation.
- **Audit & Evidence Gathering:** Thorough evaluation by accredited assessors, including documentation review, interviews, and focus groups.
- **Evaluation & Review:** Compiling findings, calculating scores, and confirming the appropriate certification level.
- **Certification Decision & Award:** Formal notification and awarding of CultureMark™ certification.
- **Report & Recommendations:** Providing a comprehensive audit report with findings and actionable recommendations.
- **Ongoing Assurance & Re-Certification:** Maintaining certification through a 2-year cycle with annual surveillance reviews and a full re-audit.

Benefits of CultureMark™ Certification

Organisations that earn the CultureMark™ certification send a powerful message that people are at the heart of their success. They gain not only the internal benefits of a healthier, more engaged workforce, but also external recognition – a competitive edge in brand trust and employer reputation.

- **Enhanced Psychological Safety:** Achieve verifiable psychological safety and build genuine trust.
- **Proactive Risk Management:** Go beyond compliance to address issues before they cause harm.
- **Increased Performance & Resilience:** People work better when they feel safe and supported.

- **Reduced Absence & Turnover:** Lead to significant cost savings by mitigating stress-related absence and staff leaving.
- **Improved Reporting & Learning:** Foster a culture where people feel safe to speak up, leading to better insights.
- **Board-Level Insight & Assurance:** Provide clear insights on true cultural health for strategic decision-making.
- **Stronger Employer Brand:** Become an employer of choice, attracting top talent and demonstrating a commitment to well-being.

Contact Us

Ready to build a trusted culture and achieve CultureMark™ Certification?

Contact Fortis & Noble today:

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