**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The issue of trust in leading public organisations continues to inspire growing confidence among management researchers and practitioners. The characteristics and organisational behaviour of leaders are analysed from various angles. The subject of the research is one of the newer approaches, namely trust-based leadership (TBL). The aim of this paper is to identify characteristics and the roles of public trust-based leadership (PTBL). This is the type of leadership that most fully incorporates trust as the basis of organisational behaviour in vertical and horizontal relationships and consequently as organisational cooperation.

**Methodology:** The primary methods used in this article are a critical review of research on organisational trust, leadership and public trust contained in the academic literature and in surveys of trust in leadership conducted in recent years by consultancies and made available on line.

**Findings:** The study confirmed that an inalienable role of leaders is to shape their own organisational credibility in both internal and external relations. Achieving a high level of this credibility allows to earn trust.

**Value Added:** Demonstrating that a key differentiator of the trust-based leadership concept is that TBL is centring trust-based relationships throughout the entire organisation.

**Recommendations:** Further research on trust-based public leadership should support its presence in contemporary organisations.

**Key words:** leadership, organisational trust, trust-based relations, public trust