

# SETTING UP INCLUSION & DIVERSITY STAFF NETWORKS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Staff networks are a useful way to gain understanding of the key challenges staff face within your organisation. They have the potential to help shape the culture and behaviours of your organisation by tapping into the ideas, passion and knowledge of the people who are involved. Effective networks can help to create change in your organisation, as well as support staff from groups who need better representation.

For those looking to actively support diversity and inclusion at their organisation, the following guidance should help in setting up and establishing staff networks:

- Establish the purpose of the network/s and who they are for**
  - Value Makers / I&D Ambassadors may be well suited to coordinate this
  - Look at the make-up of staff at your organisation and assess who might need more support and better representation
  - Use data and insights to ensure you are making appropriate decisions
- Ensure involvement with the senior leadership team at your organisation**
  - If you have support from your finance director / chief executive / HR director/ E&D team, the network will have more gravitas, and actions will be delivered on
- Facilitate engagement workshops with staff from different protected groups (i.e. staff who are disabled, LGBTQIA+, female, BAME, etc.)**
  - To understand their experiences and challenges, and to identify key themes to structure the network/s purpose on
  - Work with HR colleagues to facilitate internal workshops, or virtually using MS Teams or similar
- Once a plan has been established for the network, collate feedback from staff within the organisation to gain interest**
  - This could be done via an online survey or other internal comms
  - Questions included could ask people if they are interested in signing up, what the network should be named, how often meetings should take place etc.
- Establish membership of the group**
  - If appropriate, Terms of Reference should be produced for membership
  - Appoint a chair and co-chair to lead the meetings
  - Ensure meeting actions and outcomes are shared with HR and E&D teams- this will help to ensure actions are delivered on
- Work with your communications team to target the right staff for the network**
  - Engagement may be a challenge, but keep at it and keep consistent
  - Promote the group's inclusivity to all staff and ensure that staff are aware that it is open to everyone. Even if members don't feel personally affected by your group's concerns at that time, the more people you can educate means more awareness and understanding of equality, and will ensure your network has a greater long-term impact.
- Launch the network at an internal event / conference**
  - Ensure senior representatives attend / are involved
- Utilise MS Teams and other online platforms to facilitate meetings**
  - This may enable better attendance as no travel is required. It is also easier to facilitate meetings for larger organisations with multiple sites
- If appropriate for the network, use of social media can help build awareness and promote the network**
  - Utilise Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn
  - Groups can be set up to provide an online and informal network for group members to network and share ideas
  - Pages on social media, such as Twitter, are a good platform to promote the network and reach more people. And it is an easy way to share examples of work being delivered by the network and upcoming events / projects

#### Further references and guidance:

[www.england.nhs.uk/about/working-for/staff-networks](http://www.england.nhs.uk/about/working-for/staff-networks)  
[www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/voices/comment/how-set-up-diversity-network](http://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/voices/comment/how-set-up-diversity-network)  
[www.vercida.com/uk/articles/top-tips-to-set-up-staff-networks](http://www.vercida.com/uk/articles/top-tips-to-set-up-staff-networks)

