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**Together We Make a Difference!**

**Diversity and Inclusion are written into our organisational strategy, our   
core values and are being embedded into our decision-making.**

**Our Board is highly visible in their support for inclusion, in championing change for staff and patients and provides a continued emphasis and promotion of our commitment to improve and evolve our organisational culture. We recognise that everyone is different. We also appreciate that ‘inclusion’ means staff feel they belong, are respected, listened to and valued.**

We are passionately committed to improving the experience of all staff across the organisation. We continue to evolve ‘#Flourish at Work’ to enable, involve and engage staff in shaping and developing ideas and convert these into action to enhance our working environment.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
We have several staff networks, which focus on staff groups who have been traditionally underrepresented in the workplace or who may experience discrimination.   
  
**These networks are:**

“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”

Ralph G. Nichols

* ENABLED Network (Enhancing Ability, learning from Disability)
* Race Equality Network
* Pride Network

The staff networks are run by staff for staff and facilitate peer support, sharing of experiences and development of best practice within Newcastle Hospitals. We continue to be immensely proud of the work of our staff networks and extend our gratitude for their contribution.

These Terms of Reference (ToR) set out the working arrangements for our staff networks.

**AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

Each staff network has a range of aims and objectives and their activities support those aims.   
  
**The staff networks exist to:**

* Champion disabled, LGBTQ+ and ethnically minoritised staff.
* Contribute to the Trust’s equality, diversity, and inclusion agenda, including WRES\* and WDES\*\* workstreams.
* Improve the working environment for disabled, LGBTQ+ and ethnically minoritised, staff and support all staff to flourish.
* Encourage recruitment and retention of disabled, LGBTQ+ and ethnically minoritised staff.
* Promote an environment where all staff can be open and be their authentic selves.
* Network and share good practice both internally and externally.

**MEMBERSHIP**

* All our staff networks are ‘inclusive’ networks.
* While our staff networks are open to anyone who supports their aims, they are especially targeted at those within our workforce who either identify as belonging to or relating to the staff groups that they represent.
* To harness the collective expertise and support from across the Trust, the staff networks welcome everyone with an interest (allies), not just those who identify in a particular way.
* Membership is extended to those ‘working within our sites’ i.e., students, doctors, contractors etc.
* Every staff member is invited to join any of the staff networks provided they are willing to make a commitment to the network and abide by the network’s principles.
* Our staff networks are supported by the EDI Team

**ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY OF NETWORK MEMBERS**

An empowered, engaged and included membership is critical to the success of the staff networks.

**Individual members should:**

* Take a proactive role in the staff network
* Contribute to projects, initiatives or activities agreed by the staff network
* Regularly attend meetings
* Respect confidentiality
* Commit to upholding our Trust values

**ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CO-CHAIRS**

* Each staff network will have dedicated Co-Chairs to lead it. They will plan and run the staff network meetings and act as spokespeople/figureheads.
* This is a leadership position with specific responsibilities for which skills and attributes are needed.
* A separate role descriptor has been developed to outline the main duties and responsibilities involved.
* The co-chairs of each network will represent the Trust on regional staff network committees where able.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

* The networks provide a safe and supportive place for disabled, LGBTQ+ and ethnically minoritised staff - privacy and confidentiality is taken very seriously.
* Members are not under any obligation to declare any information about themselves that they do not wish to share.
* Each network will operate a ‘safe space’ approach to meetings and treat all network members with dignity and respect. Chatham House rules will apply.
* Records of meetings will be kept, but full names will not be included in any notes or minutes that will be circulated outside the group membership.
* The membership/distribution list will be kept confidential and members’ details will not be shared without their permission.
* All network members will be added to the Microsoft Teams chat function (where their names are visible to other members only) with their agreement

**RESOURCE & BUDGET**

* Time to attend staff network meetings will be supported - managers should enable attendance, subject to needs of the service.
* Staff are positively encouraged to attend meetings in work hours. There should be no difficulty in finding time or support from line managers to take part in network activities.
* Funding is provided on an ad-hoc basis for speakers, events, activities via the Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (People)

**MEETINGS**

* Each staff network will decide on the schedule of meetings, but meetings should take place at least once per quarter.
* A meeting schedule will be agreed at the beginning of each year and the Trust will ensure that it is well publicised.

* Meetings will typically take place via Microsoft Teams so that all meetings are accessible to colleagues irrespective of where they work.
* If a staff member is unable to attend (or is uncomfortable attending) a meeting, they can send their thoughts to the co-chairs by email or through the network’s dedicated email addresses so they can contribute remotely

* [nuth.raceequalitiesnetwork@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.raceequalitiesnetwork@nhs.net)
* [nuth.pridenetwork@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.pridenetwork@nhs.net)
* [nuth.enablednetwork@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.enablednetwork@nhs.net)

**AGENDA**

* The co-chairs play the lead role in planning the agenda, in collaboration with the EDI Team. A standing agenda will be published on the intranet and pinned to the Microsoft Teams chat function. This will be reviewed regularly.

* Members should contact the chairperson with topics they would like to be discussed.

**BUDDY SCHEME**

* We understand that being a new member of a staff network, or attending a meeting for the first time, can be a daunting experience. For this reason, each staff network is looking to develop a buddy scheme, which is a peer-to-peer support scheme and befriending service. Further details will be provided when available.
* Support can also be offered via the EDI Team. Contact nuth.editeam@nhs.net

**GROUND RULES**

* To help plan for the year ahead, each staff network will produce an action plan which details the key objectives and actions it hopes to achieve during the year, working in partnership with the EDI Team. Regional plans and actions will form part of the local plan where appropriate.
* An annual report will be produced by the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (People) and presented to People Committee to highlight the staff networks’ successes during the preceding twelve months.
* An Executive Sponsor will be identified for each staff network group
* The teams chat function is to be used for members to stay in touch between meetings and share information or best practice. Members may seek support from others but should not use inflammatory language or refer to specific work-related issues in this forum
* These ToR will be reviewed on an annual basis along with the staff networks’ effectiveness.

**GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING**

* An annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report will be produced by the Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (People) to highlight activity, successes, and challenges during the last twelve months.
* The annual report will be presented to the People Committee to provide on-going assurance of progress against objectives.
* All policy authors are advised to seek advice guidance from staff networks as part of the policy review cycle.
* Co-Chairs will link monthly with the EDI Team to work in partnership to agree an EDI Programme of Events around key diversity days.
* The ToR will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you are interested in joining one of our staff networks or would simply like to find out what they do, please make contact on the emails below:

* [nuth.raceequalitiesnetwork@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.raceequalitiesnetwork@nhs.net)
* [nuth.pridenetwork@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.pridenetwork@nhs.net)
* [nuth.enablednetwork@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.enablednetwork@nhs.net)

Any queries should initially be referred to the chairperson of the staff network or the email addresses identified above. Alternatively, contact the EDI Team on nuth.editeam.nhs.net

\*Workforce Race Equality Standards

\*\*Workforce Disability Equality Standards