This charter outlines the importance of the University’s staff networks, their roles and responsibilities and the support the networks will receive. All staff networks must refer to this charter and agree to the points laid out. If a network does not meet the criteria or does not agree to the charter’s expectations, they will not be recognised as an official University staff network nor receive the funding or support detailed below.

At the University of Bristol, we are committed to building an inclusive environment where opportunities are open to all and where diversity is encouraged and valued. Our staff networks play a vital role in achieving this aim by providing a safe space for staff with protected characteristics to connect with others with shared experiences, and by ensuring that the views and experiences of network members are heard and represented at a strategic level.

Staff networks are employee-led and open to all staff on a voluntary basis. Staff networks are self-governed, and their terms of reference, leadership and membership arrangements are determined by their own members. However, these groups must operate within the terms set out within this document so that there is consistency in the operation of all staff networks. It is also important that staff networks work in partnership with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team to advance the University’s equity, diversity and inclusion aims.

**Purpose of a staff network**

The role of staff networks at the University is to:

- Provide a space for staff with protected characteristics to connect with others who have shared experiences.
- Ensure that the voices of their members are represented by holding meetings throughout the year and feeding back any discussion points to the Voice and Influence group.
- Provide consultation on University policies and guidance, and contribute to the University’s strategic objectives.
Requirements of a staff network

In order to be considered a functioning University staff network, networks should:

- aim to support staff with a protected characteristic;1
- meet at least once a term;
- have a minimum of 10 members;
- engage with the EDI Team by ensuring a representative of the staff network (usually the Chair/Co-Chair) attends quarterly Voice and Influence group meetings, consulting on University policy and strategic aims, and submitting an annual report each year.

Roles and responsibilities

Chair/Co-Chair

The Chair is the overall lead for the staff network who manages the group and is responsible for communications, activities, arranging meetings, and producing annual reports. The Chair may choose to delegate these responsibilities to a committee. This role may be shared and it is recommended that it is rotated every three years.

Anyone from within the network can apply for the role of Chair/Co-Chair when the tenure of the current Chair/Co-Chair is coming to an end. Applications should be submitted to the current Chair/Co-Chair and/or staff network committee, and if there are more than two applications for this role, these will be circulated to network members for a vote.

The Chair/Co-Chair is expected to attend the Voice and Influence group meeting every quarter. These meetings have been established by the EDI Team so that the Chairs/Co-Chairs of the staff networks can feed back on matters arising from their members and to consult on University policy and guidance.

Chairs/Co-Chairs are not responsible for dealing with potential grievances around discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying that are brought to their attention. Instead, they should signpost staff to the appropriate services, policies and procedures. However, if Chairs/Co-Chairs notice a pattern in the experiences of their network members, or within a certain area of the University, this should be raised with the EDI Team.

Committee

We recommend that staff networks have at least two committee members to support with the running of the network. The nature of these positions can be determined by the Chair/Co-Chairs, based on the needs of the network. However, we would

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1 Please note, we will continue to honour existing networks that do not directly link to a protected characteristic if they continue to meet the remaining requirements.
suggest that it would be useful to have committee positions that focus on communication with staff network members and network events. The Chair/Co-Chair should invite interest from the network for committee positions, and if more than two members apply for the same committee position these should be put to the staff network for a vote.

Support provided to staff networks

The EDI team offers staff networks the following:

- Advice and support regarding the establishment, running and direction of the staff network (if required).
- Opportunities to provide feedback to the EDI Committee and to consult on University policy and strategy on behalf of network members.
- Promotion of the group and its activities through the EDI webpages and other internal and external communication channels.
- Access to the EDI Team central budget. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Staff networks can request funding for activities that promote inclusion at the University, such as:
  - Inviting speakers to staff network meetings based on member interest.
  - Arranging events based on member interest. This can include professional networking events for members of the network.
  - Developing promotional materials to raise awareness.
  - Celebrating key dates in the diversity calendar such as Black History Month, LGBT+ History Month or International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Please note that funding cannot be used for social events.

Staff network membership

Staff network membership is open to all staff working at the University, regardless of contract type. Staff networks are responsible for determining the openness or confidentiality of their group membership.

We recognise that identity is multi-layered, and that as such staff may identify with a number of protected characteristics. We therefore encourage all of our networks to work collaboratively with other staff networks to fully represent the diversity of our staff. Staff can also choose to be part of more than one network.

How to set up a staff network

Any staff member or group of colleagues can request to establish and lead a staff network. Groups seeking official recognition as a staff network should submit the following information to Emily Carter in the EDI Team (e.carter@bristol.ac.uk):
• Proposed name of the group.
• A mission statement demonstrating how the group will support staff with a protected characteristic and the University’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
• The names of at least ten employees seeking to establish this group (if not all ten members of staff want to be identified please do let us know).

Further information about existing staff networks at the University can be viewed on the EDI website.

Closing a staff network

If an existing staff network wishes to close, the Chair/Co-Chairs should contact the EDI Team for advice.