HOW TO SET UP A STAFF SUPPORT NETWORK

This guidance is designed to help you set up a staff support network group in your organisation.

It is not prescriptive, but provides ideas based on established good practice, and can be adapted to suit your needs for non-commercial purposes.

1. Aims

Things to consider:

- a name for the group
- its role and responsibilities
- if it support patients and carers as well as staff
- how the group aligns to your organisation's vision and values
- how the group aligns to strategic business planning
- what your responsibilities are (if any) under the Equality Act 2010
- how the group reflects the values and beliefs of the NHS Constitution
- formal terms of reference (see appendix)
- implementing a confidentiality clause to:
  - o assure members that they can speak openly
  - o protect membership identity (eg not 'outing' LGBT staff).

2. Membership

Things to consider:

- a process for appointing members
- recruiting an executive committee with specific roles such as a chair/ co or vice chair, finance officer and social secretary
- ensuring a good gender balance
- if patient/ public members are involved
- if representatives from other organisations are included including trade union representation
- duration of membership
- tiers of membership - 1st tier/ 2nd tier/ ally/ or friend
- whether members can be removed from the group.

3. Accountability / reporting

Things to consider:

- a structure for reporting on activities
- internal governance processes
- supporting equality objectives/ frameworks (eg EDS2)
- regularly reviewing the relevance and value of the group's work
- producing an annual report
- reporting into the organisational governance system.

4. Logistics

Things to consider:

- a method/ approach to working (eg a shared learning approach)
- secretariat support to organise the meetings
- the regularity of meetings and where will they be held
- a budget to provide refreshments
- whether the meetings will be face-to-face, virtual or mixed
- rotating the role of chair around the group
- ways to record discussions (eg minutes or an action log)
- generating topics for agendas
- how and when to circulate meeting papers
- if non-members can attend meetings
- whether any sub groups are required.

5. Communications

Things to consider:

- methods of sharing information and resources with the group
- dealing with confidential materials and copyright issues
- online functionality for the group (eg a web page) and which members will maintain the content.