



National Policy National Procedure National Protocol National Guideline
National Clinical Guideline

HSE National Procedure for the Management and Governance of Employee Networks

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Short summary:
It is the policy of the HSE to strengthen the principles of diversity, equality and inclusion across its workforce. The HSE aims to develop a positive and inclusive workplace culture where employee feel safe, respected and valued and to provide a voice to employees from under-represented groups. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) sets out how the HSE's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) team manage and govern HSE employee networks.
Description:
The purpose of this SOP is to set out the steps involved in managing and governing networks for HSE employee representing a range of diversity characteristics in line with best practice in DEI.

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1.0 Planning

1.1. Overview

Employee networks, also known as Employee Resources Groups (ERGs), help create inclusive workplace environments and build a sense of community.

Benefits of employee networks include:

- Support, visibility and a voice for employees
- Opportunity for employee to contribute personal stories and experience into HR policy and practice
- Assist with raising awareness on DEI issues to the wider workforce

Networks require appropriate management and governance structures given the following considerations:

- Range of diversity characteristics represented in employee networks.
- Impact of network activities in the workplace including impact on HR policy and practice
- Scale of network activities and work programmes.
- Requirement for collaboration between employee networks, the DEI team and other HSE functions such as HSE Communications, Capability and Culture and Information Technology.
- The HSE does not provide protected time for employees to attend network meetings. Attendance at network meetings is voluntary and dependent on managerial support and employee work duties.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to set out the steps involved in managing and governing employee networks for HSE employees representing a range of diversity characteristics in line with best practice in DEI.

1.3. Scope

The scope of this document is limited to the management and governance of networks for HSE employees representing diversity characteristics as outlined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2021. This includes employees from Section

38/39 organisations, HSE funded organisations and all Regional Health Areas.

The management and governance of networks for employees representing other characteristics which are not outlined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015 is not comprehended by this SOP.

1.3.1. Target users

- Members of the HSE DEI team.
- Employees from the wider Capability and Culture function assisting with employee network activities.

1.3.2. Target population

- Full-time and part-time HSE employees across all Regional Health Areas, including Section 38/39 organisations
- HSE funded agencies
- Agency employees
- Existing network members who have left the HSE
- Individuals from external organisations invited to join HSE employee networks

1.4. Objective(s)

1.4.1 To summarise the benefits of network membership.

1.4.2 To highlight the aim and objectives of employee networks.

1.4.3 To set out the steps involved in managing employee networks.

1.4.4 To clarify the roles and responsibilities of employee network members and the DEI team in relation to the participation in, management and governance of employee networks.

1.4.5 To outline general employee network management and communication principles

1.4.6 To identify work programmes for employee networks.

1.4.7 To establish governance structures for employee networks

1.5. Outcome(s)

- 1.5.1 This SOP is expected to result in improvements in the management and governance of employee networks, leading to the development of a positive, equitable and inclusive culture at work, where employees feel valued and respected.
- 1.5.2 The outcomes are anticipated to include:
- Improved support and visibility for employees representing diversity characteristics.
 - Increased employee satisfaction and sense of belonging at work.
 - Increased engagement with employees representing diversity characteristics, leading to improvements in HR policy and practice.
 - Increased awareness on DEI issues to the wider HSE workforce.
 - Improved consistency in management of networks including network governance and accountability.

1.6. Disclosure of interests

No conflicts of interest relate to this SOP.

1.7. Rationale / alignment with HSE national priorities

- 1.7.1 This Standard Operating Procedure has been developed to support delivery of the HSE's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024. Priority 2 aims to strengthen the voice of employees representing all diversity characteristics, through enhanced feedback and employee engagement.
- 1.7.2 This document aligns with the HSE's People Strategy 2019-2024, the overarching national strategy setting out how the HSE will develop the way it recruits, plans, leads, employs and develops its workforce. A number of priorities set out in the People Strategy either explicitly or implicitly support the enhancement of DEI measures. Priority 2 (Employee Experience: Focus on Wellbeing and Engagement) specifically aims to ensure a positive, respectful and psychologically safe work culture for employees, and is relevant to this Standard Operating Procedure.

1.7.3 The content in this Standard Operating Procedure also aligns with How to Develop HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines: A Practical Guide 2023. This guide sets out a clear and consistent approach to developing policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines (PPPGs).

1.8. Supporting evidence

1.8.1 Relevant legislation includes:

- The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021
- The Disability Act 2005
- The Human Rights & Equality Commission Act 2014

The legislation above details the legal duties related to DEI that the HSE and other public bodies must uphold, and places a positive duty on public bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect Human Rights, in their day-to-day work.

1.8.2 Related 3PGs:

- How to Develop HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines: A Practical Guide 2023
- Dignity at Work Policy for the Health Service
- HSE National Policy on the Prevention and Management of Work-Related Stress

2.0 Methodology

The content in this SOP was developed to align with best practice in developing guidelines, as outlined in How to Develop HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines: A Practical Guide 2023.

2.1 List of key questions this National 3PG will answer

This SOP aims to answer the following questions:

- How to manage an employee network, including network meetings communications, sub-groups and work programmes.
- How to establish governance structures for an employee network, including development of a Terms of Reference document and appointing network Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

2.2 Describe and document the evidence search

The DEI team conducted a review of management and governance structures for employee networks in other public and private sector organisations. This review included:

- A search of publicly available information on employee networks in public and private sector bodies.
- Interviews with individuals who have expertise in establishing and managing employee networks.
- Analysis of the DEI teams' previous knowledge and expertise of employee networks in other organisations.

2.3 Describe the method of screening and evidence appraisal

The DEI team reviewed all available evidence and agreed upon a process to manage and govern employee networks.

2.4. Attach any copyright or permissions sought

No copyright or permissions are required in relation to this document.

3.0 Procedure

The following employee network topics are outlined in this section:

- Employee network rationale
- Employee network membership
- Employee network recruitment and sign-up
- Employee network communications
- Employee network GDPR and confidentiality
- Appointment of employee network Chairs and Vice-Chairs
- Employee network meetings
- Employee network work programmes
- Employee network roles and responsibilities

3.1 Employee Network Rationale

This is a controlled document and must always be accessed from the [HSE National Central Repository](#). Whilst printing is permitted, printed copies are not controlled. Controlled documents must never be saved to secondary electronic/other locations which are accessible by staff or the public.

3.1.1 The rationale for establishing a new employee network may be based on:

- Quantitative data, such as workforce statistical data, data from the National Employee Survey or Irish Census data.
- Quantitative or qualitative published research evidence or best practice guidelines from internal or reputable external sources.
- Qualitative data including evidence from DEI enquiries, employee relations cases, or employee engagement.
- Evidence from legal proceedings such as case law.
- Good practice examples from within Ireland or from other comparable jurisdictions.
- Engagement with other HSE divisions including senior management.

3.1.2 The formation of a new employee network is approved by HSE senior management.

3.2 Employee Network Membership

3.2.1 Employee network membership is open to:

- Full-time and part-time HSE employees across all Regional Health Areas
- Section 38/39 organisations
- HSE funded agencies
- Agency employees
- Existing network members who have left the HSE
- Individuals from external organisations invited to join HSE employee networks

3.3 Employee Network Recruitment and Sign-Up

3.3.1 The DEI team engage with HSE Communications to promote the employee networks and to recruit members to employee networks. A range of communication channels can be used to promote the benefits of network membership including Health Services News messages, the [Diversity, Equality and Inclusion](#) webpage and Hub, Health Matters and social media platforms.

3.3.2 Employees who are interested in joining a HSE employee network can do so by emailing diversity.hr@hse.ie and specifying which employee network(s) they would like to join. Employees should provide a HSE email address. If a HSE employee does not have a HSE email address, they can provide their HSE employee address as verification of their employment in the HSE.

3.3.3 A member of the DEI team will then:

- Add the individual's name and email address to the network distribution list and relevant Network Microsoft (MS) Teams Chat.
- Send a copy of the network Terms of Reference document to the new

- member.
- Arrange for a network lanyard to be sent to the new member.

3.4 Employee Network Communications

- 3.4.1 The DEI team manage all employee network communications.
- 3.4.2 Employee network communication channels include HSE email and MS Teams Chat.
- 3.4.3 The primary communication channel used for employee network communications is HSE email.
- 3.4.4 To maintain confidentiality, the DEI team circulate employee network communications to members via email (Bcc) from the DEI mailbox.
- 3.4.5 Individual members may share relevant resources or updates with the DEI team to share with the employee network. The DEI team assess the relevance of any materials any will only share relevant employee network materials with members of the network.
- 3.4.6 All network members are added to an MS Teams Group Chat. The aim of this Group Chat is to provide a channel for members to connect with each other, discuss relevant topics and share resources in between employee network meetings.
- 3.4.7 Members may leave this Group Chat if they so wish. Members require a HSE email and HealthIRL domain to join the MS Teams Group Chat.
- 3.4.8 The DEI team are not active participants in the Group Chat.

3.5 Employee Network GDPR and Confidentiality

- 3.5.1 The DEI team maintain central distribution lists for all employee networks for the purposes of sharing employee network communications and circulating meeting invites.
- 3.5.2 The following information is recorded in network distribution lists:
 - Member's name
 - Member's email address
 - Record of whether member has been added to the employee network MS Teams Chat.
- 3.5.3 No additional personal information is recorded by the DEI team.
- 3.5.4 Members are asked to be respectful of individual's contributions across all communication channels.
- 3.5.5 Information shared by members by email, on MS Teams Group Chat or during Network meetings is not to be shared externally or with HSE employees who

are not members of the employee network, unless permission is sought by the DEI team from members.

- 3.5.6 A top-line written record is kept of meeting discussion topics. Individual contributions are not attributed to individual members.
- 3.5.7 Anonymised content from network members is used as evidence in policy and training work programmes.
- 3.5.8 The DEI team circulate meeting placeholders and invites via email (Bcc) from the DEI mailbox.
- 3.5.9 Members should contact diversity.hr@hse.ie with specific individual issues or questions.

3.6 Appointment of Employee Network Chairs and Vice-Chairs

- 3.6.1 The DEI team lead all activities, including facilitating network meetings, until Network Chairs and Vice-Chairs are appointed. The timeframe for appointing Network Chairs and Vice-Chairs will depend on network membership and general interest from members in taking up a Chair or Vice-Chair role.
- 3.6.2 The appointment of Network Chairs and Vice-Chairs is made approximately six to twelve months after the formation of the network to provide time for recruiting network members.
- 3.6.3 Expressions of interest in Network Chair and Vice-Chair roles are sought from employee network members by the DEI team. Employees who are not members of an employee network are not permitted to apply for Network Chair and Vice-Chair roles.
- 3.6.4 The anticipated time commitment of the Chair and Vice-Chairs is approximately 1 to 2 hours per month.
- 3.6.5 Chair and Vice-Chair appointments are filled from within the network.
- 3.6.6 The leadership term for Network Chairs and Vice-Chairs Network Chair is two years.
- 3.6.7 Appointment of employee network Chair and Vice-Chairs is made by the DEI team and based on considerations including:
 - Membership of the employee network.
 - Direct expressions of interest received from network members.
 - Representation of diverse cultures and diversity characteristics.
 - Active participation at employee network meetings.

3.7 Employee Network Meetings

- 3.7.1 Each network meets up to six times annually.
- 3.7.2 Network meetings take place virtually on Zoom and last for up to two hours.

Face-to-face meetings may be arranged in specific circumstances, and where public health guidelines permit.

- 3.7.3 The quorum for network decision making during a meeting is six people or if the group is greater than 15, a simple majority.
- 3.7.4 Network members may establish a series of MS Teams meetings called Café Connects. The aim of Café Connects is to provide a forum for members to meet outside of employee network meetings.
- 3.7.5 The following general meeting principles apply to all in-person and virtual network meetings, subgroup meetings and Café Connects:
- Network meetings are a safe, supportive and respectful space for members to share their experiences and have open discussions on topics relevant to the broader network.
 - Contributions from all network members are respected.
 - Members are asked to be respectful of each other's chosen names and pronouns.
 - Due to the time constraints of network meetings, the DEI team may ask individual members to follow up directly with the DEI team on specific issues.
 - A top-line written record is kept of key meeting discussion topics. Individual contributions are not attributed to individual members.
 - Members are encouraged to turn on their cameras during the meeting where possible.
 - Members can make contributions during the Zoom meeting by using the Raise Hand functionality or adding a comment to the chat box.
 - Additional meeting principles can be established if required and agree upon by network members.
 - The participation of employees in network meetings and network activities is at the discretion of individual line managers, and may be limited by local factors such as work commitments and schedules.

Prior to Network meeting

1. Contact Network Chairs to arrange date for meeting.
2. Contact ISL users to confirm attendance at network meeting. If ISL users attending, contact ISL interpreting agency to arrange ISL support.
3. Circulate meeting placeholder approximately four weeks prior to meeting date.
4. Share draft agenda and meeting discussion topic with Network Chairs and DEI team for review. Network members may also send agenda topics to DEI team.
5. Circulate Zoom meeting link and meeting documentation (meeting agenda, notes from previous meeting, awareness calendar and other pre-reads) from DEI mailbox at least one week prior to meeting date.

Network meeting

8. Attend Network meeting.
9. Provide input on Network meetings discussions.

Post Network meeting

10. Review Network meeting notes.
11. Circulate notes to DEI team and Network Chairs for review.
12. Circulate final notes to Network distribution list.
13. If ISL support availed of, request invoice and arrange purchase order.

3.8 Employee Network Work Programmes

- 3.8.1 Network subgroups may be established by the DEI team for specific programmes such as:
- Awareness day campaigns
 - Guideline development
 - Review of HR and training materials
 - Equality Impact Assessment workshops
 - Other relevant programmes
- 3.8.2 Other HSE divisions may invite network members to participate in specific working groups such as to review content and provide feedback on HSE policy, guidance or training materials. In these circumstances, the DEI team circulate relevant communications to the relevant network distribution lists.
- 3.8.3 Participation in a subgroup is at the discretion of individual members.
- 3.8.4 Subgroups are generally led by a member of the DEI team or a designated network member.
- 3.8.5 General network meeting principles apply to all network subgroup meetings.
- 3.8.6 Local network support groups can be established to further the work of the network in local settings. A member of the Network can volunteer to lead a local network support group. Support groups can be aligned with Regional Health Areas, Hospitals or other local structures. Information on Local network supports groups is provided in Appendix 1.

3.9 Employee Network Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.9.1 The DEI team are responsible for:
- Establishing rationale and developing proposals for the establishment of new employee networks. The DEI team may consult with internal HSE divisions or employees to assist with establishing rationale for the creation of a new employee network and scope of the network activities.
 - Providing overall guidance, co-ordination and direction to employee networks.
 - Drafting a network Terms of Reference document for approval by Network Chair, Vice-Chairs and network members. A sample Terms of Reference document is attached as Appendix 8.
 - Reviewing the network Terms of Reference document on an annual basis, incorporating feedback from network members.

- Providing administrative and organisational support for network meetings and subgroups including meeting set up, agenda development and circulation and minute taking, with the support of Leadership Learning and Talent Management (LLTM) colleagues
- Managing and updating network distribution lists and MS Teams groups.
- Circulating communications to network members.
- Supporting Network Chairs and Vice-Chairs with the development of network meeting agendas.
- Providing DEI expertise, advice, support to Network members at network meetings.
- Providing strategic input, subject matter expertise and insights at network and network subgroup meetings.
Liaising with relevant internal HSE functions and external agencies in relation to network activities.

3.9.2 The Employee Network Chair or Vice-Chair are responsible for:

- Providing overall direction to the network and partnering with the HSE DEI team relating to the Network's work strategic priorities and work programmes.
- Facilitating and leading a schedule of bi-monthly network meetings.
- Ensuring that network meetings are run in an inclusive manner in accordance with HSE values.
- Providing strategic input, subject matter expertise and insights on network discussions.
- Providing recommendations for continuous improvement of network meetings.

3.9.3 Employee Network members are responsible for:

- Indicating agreement to the network Terms of Reference.
- Providing an email address for network communications.
- Actively participating in network meetings and providing input, subject matter expertise and insights on network discussions.
- Sharing meeting agenda topics with the DEI team.
- Sharing relevant information or resources (guidance, external events etc.) with the DEI team for distribution to network members.
- Sharing information about local projects and initiatives with the DEI team so that they can be replicated by network members in other areas.
- Participating in network MS Teams Chat
- Employee Network members may take up additional Network responsibilities such as:

- Joining a local network support group
- Leading a local network support group and engaging with local Communication and Health and Wellbeing teams.
- Setting up virtual connects (Café Connects) for Network members
- Participating in network subgroups and work programmes

4.0 Consultation

4.1. Stakeholder involvement

The DEI team regularly consult with network Chairs and Vice-Chairs on management and governance of employee networks.

4.2. External review

No external review was required.

5.0 National implementation plan

5.1. Resource implications

The DEI resources necessary to implement this Standard Operating Procedure include:

- Use of collaboration platforms such as MS Teams and Zoom.
- DEI team availability
- Irish Sign Language Interpreter support
- Administrative support from the wider Capability and Culture function
- Additional resources for in-person meetings include catering costs, room availability and IT support.

5.2. Describe the structure and governance of your national implementation team.

The HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion team has responsibility for implementing this Standard Operating Procedure. This team is part of the HSE's Capability and Culture function within National Human Resources.

The structure of this team is as follows:

- 1 National Lead, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (General Manager)

- 2 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Managers (Grade VIII)
- 1 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Officer (Grade VII)

5.3. List tools and resources developed to support local implementation of your National 3PG.

Employee Network Collaboration Channels

- Microsoft Teams
- Zoom
- HSE Email

Employee Network Promotional Channels

- [Diversity, Equality and Inclusion](#) webpage
- HSE All Employee Update emails
- HSE social media channels
- Health Matters

Employee Network Assets

- Network posters
- Network Terms of Reference document

5.4. Expected date of full implementation of your National 3PG

This Standard Operating Procedure will be implemented from 1 February 2025.

6.0 Governance and approval

Governance of this document sits with the DEI team. The National Lead for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion has the final say on the content of this Standard Operating Procedure.

7.0 Communication and dissemination plan

This Standard Operating Procedure is primarily for the use of the DEI team. The document will be made available for access by all team members on the DEI team's shared folder. The document may be shared with key partner agencies and stakeholders for the purpose of sharing good practice.

8.0 Sustainability

8.1. Describe the plan for national monitoring and audit

Not relevant

8.2. National audit tool

Not applicable

9.0 Review / update

9.1. Next review date

- 9.1.1 This document is reviewed every three years. The next date for revision is 1 February 2028.
- 9.1.2 This document may be amended at any time by the relevant DEI team member. Approval responsibility is with the National Lead for Diversity Equality and Inclusion.
- 9.1.3 Network members are invited to contact the DEI team with feedback on Network management and governance. Feedback from Network members is monitored and collated by the DEI team. This feedback is then used to inform a review of Network management and governance.
- 9.1.4 Network members can contact the DEI team if they have grievances in relation to conduct of Network members. The National Lead for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion will review these grievances and if required, align on appropriate actions with Network Chair and Vice-Chairs.
- 9.1.5 The National Lead for Diversity Equality and Inclusion is responsible for amending the front sheet of this document.
- 9.1.6 The relevant DEI team member may escalate feedback to the National Lead if it is deemed to require immediate action or onward escalation.
- 9.1.7 The DEI team meet regularly with Network Chairs to discuss and review Network management and governance, including Network meetings and activities.

10.0 References

- How to Develop HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines: A Practical Guide 2023

- Dignity at Work Policy for the Health Service 2022
- HSE People Strategy 2019-2024
- HSE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024

11.0 Glossary of terms

DEI: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

Diversity characteristic: a characteristic of a person defined as a protected “ground” under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. There are nine diversity grounds.

ISL: Irish Sign Language

MS: Microsoft

PPPG: Policy, Procedure, Protocol and/or Guideline

Guideline: a principle or criterion that guides or directs action

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

12.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Membership of Development Group

Appendix 2: Membership of Approval Governance Group

Appendix 3: Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

Appendix 4: Sample implementation plan template

Appendix 5: National Audit Tool

Appendix 6: Checklist

Appendix 7: Signature sheet

Appendix 8: Guideline Development Working Group Terms of Reference

Appendix 9: Guideline scoping document template

Appendix 10: Guideline development workshop sample agenda

Appendix 11: Written guideline template

Please note that Appendices 1-7 are not included in the current SOP. Templates for these appendices can be found in the [HSE National Central Repository](#).

Appendix 8: Sample Terms of Reference document

Le Chéile Network Terms of Reference Network for employees with disabilities in the HSE and their allies

1. Network Aim

To support the creation of an inclusive, welcoming and supportive work environment where employees with visible and non-visible disabilities and long-term health conditions are treated with dignity and respect and have equal opportunities.

2. Network Objectives (Benefits of Network Membership)

The objectives of the Network are:

- to provide support, visibility and a voice to employees with disabilities.
- to offer a forum to discuss experiences in a safe space.
- to provide resources on disability topics.
- to provide an opportunity for employees to contribute personal stories and practice into HSE policy and guidance development.
- to support the equality-impact assessment of HSE policies, including recruitment and selection policies
- to develop the ally role. Refer to Appendix 1 for further information.
- to assist with awareness raising on disability topics to the wider workforce and have a positive impact on the quality of care delivered to service users
- to support challenges to discriminatory behaviours and facilitate interventions by the DEI team where necessary.

3. Network Membership and Recruitment

The Network is open to:

- Full-time and part-time HSE employees across all Regional Health Areas, including Section 38/39 organisations
- HSE funded agencies

- Agency employees
- Existing network members who have left the HSE
- Individuals from HSE external organisations invited to join HSE employee networks

4. Network Meetings

The Network facilitates a series of bi-monthly meetings to provide a forum to members to discuss experiences in a safe space.

- Network meetings take place virtually on Zoom and last for up to two hours.
- Face-to-face meetings may be arranged in specific circumstances, and where public health guidelines permit.
- The quorum for Network decision making is six people or if the group is greater than 15, a simple majority.
- The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) team ask Network members for agenda topics, circulate an agenda one week prior to each meeting and circulate top-line written notes from Network meeting discussions.

5. Network Meeting Principles

The following general principles apply to Network meetings:

- Network meetings are a safe, respectful space for members to share their experiences and have open discussions on topics relevant to the broader Network.
- Contributions from all Network members are respected.
- Due to the broad range of disabilities represented in the Network and due to the time constraints of Network meetings, the DEI team may ask individual members to follow up directly with the DEI team on specific issues.
- A top-line written record is kept of key meeting discussion topics. Individual contributions are not attributed to individual members.
- Members are encouraged to turn on their cameras during the meeting where possible.
- Members can make contributions during the Zoom meeting by using the Raise Hand functionality or adding a comment to the chat box.

6. Network Communications

The DEI team circulate Network communications to Network members via email (Bcc) from the DEI mailbox.

All Network members are added to an MS Teams Group Chat. The aim of this Group Chat is to provide a channel for members to connect with each other, discuss relevant topics and share resources in between Network meetings. Members may leave this Group Chat if they so wish. Members require a HSE email and HealthIRL domain to join the MS Teams Group Chat. The DEI team are not active participants in the Group Chat. Members should contact diversity.hr@hse.ie with specific individual issues or questions.

7. Role of a Network Member

General

- Indicate agreement to the Network Terms of Reference.
- Provide an email address for Network communications.

Participate in Network Meetings

- Commit to attend bi-monthly Network meetings in so far as possible. The overall time commitment for participation in Network meetings is up to two hours every two months.
- In the event that a member is unable to attend a meeting, forward any relevant contributions to the DEI team prior to the meeting.
- Provide input, subject matter expertise and insights on Network discussions.
- Aim to secure a HealthIRL domain so as to participate in Network discussions on MS Teams Chat.

Provide Support and Share Information

All Network members are welcome to:

- contact DEI team or Network Chairs/Vice-Chairs about topics or issues.
- share suggested Network discussion topics with the DEI team.
- share relevant information or resources (guidance, external events etc.) with the DEI team for distribution to Network members .
- share information about local projects and initiatives with the DEI team so that they can be replicated by Network members in other areas.
- set up virtual connects (Café Connects) for Network members in between Network meetings (the DEI team can assist with circulating virtual meeting links)
- display Network posters in your workplace
- engage in discussions with Network members on Network MS Teams Chat group (TBC)
- get to know your Network Local Lead and join a Network Local Group (see Appendix 3)

Lead and Participate in Network Subgroups and Working Groups

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Network subgroups may be established for specific work-strands, such as to:

- Support disability awareness day campaigns.
- Develop guidelines on inclusive and accessible communications, reasonable accommodations (built environment, assistive technologies etc.), Universal Design and other relevant topics.
- Review content of HSE disability training for managers and employees.
- Participate in Equality Impact Assessment workshops to review HSE policies, such as recruitment and hiring practices.

Participation in a subgroup is at the discretion of individual members; no specific duties or tasks are assigned to Network members without their agreement. Members of subgroups may include Network members, HSE colleagues or external guests. Each subgroup will be managed by a designated subgroup lead. The subgroup lead reports to the Network Chair and provides subgroup updates at Network meetings.

Other HSE divisions may request Network members to participate in specific working groups:

- Accessibility feedback sessions with HSE Communications team.
- Other working groups on relevant topics, such as Universal Design, accessible procurement etc.

8. Role of Network Chair and Vice-Chair/Co-Chair

- Chair and Vice Chair appointments are filled from within the Network.
- Refer to Appendix 2 for further information on the role of the Network Chair and Vice Chair/Co-Chair.

9. Role of the DEI Team

General

To provide co-ordination and support for activities related to DEI in the workplace, including (but not limited to) responding to queries from managers and employees about DEI matters; influencing HR policy; promotion and awareness-raising; and developing resources and training.

The DEI team can provide advice, support and mediation in workplace disputes, but cannot represent or advocate for employees in such matters.

DEI team mailbox: diversity.hr@hse.ie

Network Meetings and Subgroups

- Provide administrative and organisational support for Network meetings and subgroups including meeting set up, agenda development and circulation and minute taking.

- Support Network Chairs with development of Network meeting agendas.
- Provide strategic input, subject matter expertise and insights on subgroup discussions.
- Liaise with relevant HSE functions in relation to subgroup activities.

10. Terms of Reference Review

Network Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis.

11. Role of an ally

What is an ally in the workplace?

- An ally is someone who is willing to take action in support of another person, in order to remove barriers that impede that person from contributing their skills and talents in the workplace. An ally uses their own privilege to challenge systems and processes that offer opportunities only to a distinct majority grouping.
- The term “ally” entered popular usage to describe people who were supportive of the LGBTQ movements in the second half of the twentieth century, and it now applies more broadly in inclusion work.
- An ally focuses on behaviour that promotes equality through action. When it comes to allyship, it’s about the impact of real action, not just the intent. True allies put others at the centre of their actions.

Why is allyship important in the workplace?

- Allyship in the workplace is essential to promoting an atmosphere where all employees feel they can bring their whole self to work, without being discriminated against or experiencing fear of discrimination.
- Allyship provides visibility and a voice to employees who traditionally may have felt excluded or marginalised.
- Fostering an inclusive culture is one way that organisations can try to reduce instances of bias and discrimination. To truly foster an inclusive culture, is to foster in everyone a recognition of the value of inclusion, their personal responsibility in contributing to it and the benefits they accrue from it.

How can I be an ally?

- **Listen to and learn from your colleagues**
 - Meet with colleagues one-to-one in more casual settings, listen to their stories, and ask them questions about their experiences in the workplace.
- **Educate yourself**

- Keep attuned to discussion topics and current events in the external environment and educate yourself on the correct disability terminology.
- Join the HSE Le Chéile Network to support colleagues with a disability.
- **Speak up**
 - Actively stand up for equality in the workplace to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
 - Challenge inappropriate behaviours, biases, and stereotypes towards colleague with a disability.
 - Notice when a colleague is suffering from an incident of discrimination and offer direct support.

12. Network Chair Role Description

In collaboration with the HSE DEI Team, the Network Chair will be responsible for leading and facilitating Network activities and partnering with the HSE DEI team in discussions relating to the Network's strategic plans, planned activities and opportunity areas.

Chair and Vice Chair or Co-Chair appointments will be filled from within the Network.

Key Responsibilities

- Facilitate and lead a schedule of bi-monthly Network meetings.
- Ensure that Network meetings are run in an inclusive manner in accordance with HSE values.
- Provide strategic input, subject matter expertise and insights on Network discussions.
- Provide recommendations for continuous improvement of Network meetings.
- Inform their Line Manager about the Steering Group Chair role and ensure that Steering Group participation is incorporated in performance management discussions.

Time Commitment: it is anticipated that the time commitment required of the Chair would be in the region of 1-2 hours per month.

Leadership Term: The term for Network Chair is two years.

The Network Chair should:

- Have enthusiasm and interest in the role and in the specific focus area of the Network Group, ideally with the relevant diversity characteristic
- Have strong leadership potential

- Be a change agent who exhibits diversity and inclusion in everyday action
- Good understanding and awareness of relevant HSE organisational policies and processes

Note: The Vice-Chair or Co-Chair is responsible for supporting the Chair with all activities as outlined in the Network Chair Role Description or for deputising for the Chair in the Chair's absence.

13. Le Chéile Network Local Groups

The aim of a Le Chéile Network local group is to provide support structures for Le Chéile Network members and employees in local settings.

Suggested activities for Le Chéile Network Local Groups

- Connect with colleagues locally (virtual or face-to-face). For example at regular Zoom calls or coffee meet ups. Members may also wish to partake in other wellbeing activities such as walks, local excursions etc.
- Provide support to colleagues, either directly or by sharing resources from the DEI team and DEI Hub.
- Raise awareness about the Le Chéile Network at a local level in collaboration with local Communications teams.
- Develop links with local external disability groups.
- Support with local Pride activities.
- Provide feedback about local activities at network meetings.

How Le Chéile Network Local Groups work

- Local groups can be aligned with a Hospital Group, Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) Areas or Regional Health Area.
- Supported by the DEI team, one or two Network members act as the lead contact(s) to get the local group established.
- Once a local group is established, smaller groups may naturally form based on the geographical proximity of members.

Lead Contact role

- Supported by the DEI team and local Communications team, set up an initial introductory virtual call for the local group or arrange a face-to-face meeting.
- Establish regular meetings and connection points for the local group.

DEI Team role

- Development of materials and resources that can be used locally. For example, awareness raising, communications etc.
- Assist with operational or logistical issues. For example, booking meeting rooms, connecting with local Communication teams etc.

Governance

- The general principles of the Le Chéile Network ToR apply to local groups.
- Based on the level of interest, local groups may decide to initiate the local group as an informal connection point between members and subsequently set up a more formal structure, similar to how the Le Chéile Network operates. Local groups have the autonomy to decide how best to operate given the local context, level of interest and engagement of members.