

Disability Staff Networks

This factsheet is part of our Disability Package 2021. The full package comprises 10 in depth documents to support disabled employees across all considerations of the employee experience.

These are:

- Colour blindness in the workplace
- Developing Assistance Dog Policies
- Disability Staff Networks
- Inclusive Communications
- Sensory Impairment
- Supporting colleagues who acquire their impairment whilst in your employment
- Supporting colleagues with learning disabilities in the workplace
- Supporting colleagues with long term health conditions in the workplace
- Supporting colleagues with physical disabilities in the workplace
- Understanding non-visible disabilities

This particular package specifically focuses on setting up disability staff networks. If you want to find out more information, or want to know how to bring this or any of the content in our

Disability Package to life in a meaningful way for your organisation, please speak to your Account Manager or email members@inclusiveemployers.co.uk

Staff Disability Networks are a good way to keep Disability issues, challenges and successes on the agenda within an organisation. Whilst we have a more indepth package supporting organisations on developing staff networks (link in package) this factsheet is designed to focus specifically on quick tips to set up a Disability Network

Setting up a network

1. Be clear on your super objective – What are you setting out to achieve? What needs to change? What evidence do you have internally that Disability is a key area that requires focus?
2. Map out who your stakeholders are/who you need to influence – How do you get senior buy in? Can you find a Senior sponsor to key the conversation on the table in leadership meetings?
3. Rally the troops – Think about who can help you make this a reality, can you enlist the help of HR, D&I Manager, Comms Manager, other network leads, passionate employees?
4. Think about the bigger picture - How will this network fit in to the overall structure of I&D in your organisation? Are there specific objectives on a broader plan that this will support?
5. Get organised – What does the structure of the Network look like? Have you discussed Governance, roles and responsibilities?

6. Get Creative – Once you've set out your plan have you thought about creative ways you can bring the topic to life, keep people engaged, create more allies?
7. Reach out – Have you looked externally for inspiration or voices to bring in to your organisation? What are other organisations doing?

Aims of the network

1. Champion inclusion – raise awareness to colleagues of the opportunity of inclusion – how it will make our organisations stronger and enable our colleagues to come to work, be themselves, work in a way that suits them, and deliver on our business needs by focusing on Disability.
2. Support people - Many disabled people need support at different points in their lives. Not everyone can easily access that support. People who care for disabled people also may need a space they can feel supported. A network can be an amazing tool to offer support to colleagues and should be able to signpost to professional help for those that may need it.
3. Challenge inequalities - A network is a critical tool in shining the light on inequalities and injustices that disabled employees face in our workplaces. A network is able to offer an organisation an 'early warning' or 'heads up' on inequality, injustice and cultural exclusions – they can

also be the incubator of ideas to address these inequalities.

4. Reach employees through communications and key dates – Tying your communications to the organisation around key days in the disability calendar can help to raise awareness and learning of key issues faced by the community.
5. Support the wider I&D efforts of the organisation – Once established, the Disability Network can be seen as a best practice group that helps to inspire other key areas of the diversity agenda.
6. Make a difference – Most people who are part of any network do so as a side role to their day job, most people do so because they are passionate about making their organisation a better place. Always remember that having a positive impact even on only one person is a big step forward for inclusion.

Who can attend?

1. Anyone!
2. People with lived disability experience
3. Allies to disabled people
4. Those who are carers for a person with a disability

Intersectionality

1. There may be other networks – how do you work together to champion inclusion?
2. Everyone is unique. People who have a disability may belong to other groups also which will impact their experience as a disabled person.