**Chairs of Equality Staff Networks (via Teams)**

**Wednesday 19 April 2023 (1.30pm)**

**Attendees**

Stockton Council Kimberley Edwards & Caites Nendick

Durham CC Claire Holt

Together for Children Ola Tony-Obot & Lisa Elliott

Northumberland CC Victoria Perkins

Redcar & Cleveland BC Jane Garnett

North Tyneside Council Debbie Lydon

South Tyneside Council Susan Clennell, Amy Norton

**Apologies:**

Stockton Council Ian Tranter, Rachel McKnight & Roisin McKenzie

Cleveland Fire Katie Love & Ruth Anderson

North Tyneside Council Suzanne Duncan & Jessica Madden

Durham CC Gladys Mante-Nyadu, Michael Shannon &

Mark Colman

Newcastle City Council Peter Scott

Sunderland Council Nicole Appleby

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Minutes and Actions**

No previous minutes or actions received.

1. **Structure/format and Chairing of meetings**

A discussion took place in relation to the current structure and arrangements of the meeting, to decide whether a rolling chair was effective. Members of the group felt that the meetings were extremely useful and an opportunity to gain experience from others. The frequency of the meetings was felt to be adequate. However, there have been difficulties with securing chairs and note takers for the meetings, as this relies on people volunteering and other work commitments can sometimes impact on this.

It was felt that the best way forward would be to have a permanent Chair for the meeting as this would allow consistency to the meetings. It was suggested to send out an email to all members of the group asking for volunteers, and we would have to Co-Chairs, to assist, this would mean chairing 2 meetings a year between the two chairs.

Once we have Co-Chairs in place, the meetings can then be set in advance for the year, based on their work commitments. The Chairs can then set an action plan and future activities.

**Action:** Claire to ask Brenda to circulate an email for volunteers for the Chairing role. To also ask officers to do a refresh of their authority membership.

1. **General Information Sharing**

Redcar and Cleveland- policy approved to establish staff networks and drafted terms of reference. Currently updating employee data to update HR system. Staff receive a quarterly reminder update.

Sunderland Together for Children- have three networks. They have recently produced weekly communications on Ramadan, how this links to their work with children and families, and with staff sharing stories. They have also organised a celebration for the end of Ramadan, linked in with community organisations which has also helped promote their service in the local community. They have also installed a prayer room. The accessibility network are developing a plan for their network, also looking at work experience placements.

Stockton- Young staff network, involved in corporate level projects such as involvement in new council building, restructure of new town centre. They have received a request for a buddy system from Directors so that each network has a director ‘buddy.’ Carers network are producing a carers passport. There will also be training to raise awareness with staff, and to bring more people on board. They are celebrating carers week in June, and there will be a carers market on Stockton High Street.

South Tyneside- redeveloping EDI policy. Now have four staff networks in place, established terms of reference. Have regular EDI meetings with senior offices and members with links from staff networks. Planned activities include, International Women’s Day, Carers event in June. Also implemented ‘Age pledge’ to try and encourage over 50s to be proactive to apply for jobs, which has had senior manager approval. Faith room also now open.

North Tyneside – have four networks (including gender equality) they have speakers, events around diversity and developed a calendar. The 10th May is national staff network day, and a joint event will be taking place. Currently updating leave policy, which includes carers leave. They have celebrated social work day and international women’s day. EDI data collection is ongoing and linked with ONS data. Also working on recruitment plan, which includes candidate attraction plan, benefits for working for the council, information less job specific and more about the area and the council.

1. **Links to NHS**

Remove for future agenda

1. **Events**

To be discussed at future meetings.

1. **Forward Plan**

To be discussed at future meetings. However, ideas include regional training for Chairs, joint events, recruitment and selection, link in North East jobs page.

1. **Future dates**

To be confirmed