Guidance on Staff Support Groups

Embedding Diversity & Inclusion
Our Pledge

“We are LPT, a values based Trust that delivers high quality integrated health and social care developed around the needs of our local people, families and communities. We want LPT to be a great place to work, where we have a culture of continuous improvement and recognition and where collective leadership empowers high performing, innovative teams.” – Dr Peter Miller, Chief Executive

Our pledge reflects our values and has been developed with staff and staff side representatives to make clear the expectations we have of each other in order for us all to deliver high quality, patient-centred care which is at the heart of everything we do.

As a staff member I will...

- Commit to doing the best I can
- Be loyal to and supportive of my organisation
- Be a team player
- Willingly share my ideas, knowledge and experience
- Continue to improve myself and my service for the benefit of our service users
- Be flexible and adaptable in my work
- Maintain high quality and high standards
- Embrace diversity and the richness it brings
- Take ownership of my work and be held accountable

As an organisation we will...

- Provide opportunities for development and career progression
- Appreciate and recognise your contribution to our Trust
- Provide a safe and secure working environment
- Promote a culture that provides a happy and friendly work place for you and your team
- Give you the tools to do your job
- Support you to maintain a healthy work/life balance
- Listen to your views to inform our decision making
- Communicate with you in an honest, open and timely way

As a manager/leader I will...

- Inspire a shared purpose and provide clarity of expectations
- Be visible, accessible and approachable
- Be supportive, open, honest and transparent
- Listen, hear and give a voice to all
- Value and celebrate the successes of my team and individuals
- Promote health and wellbeing within my team
- Give my staff freedom to act and encourage collective leadership

Chair:
Cathy Ellis

Chief Executive:
Dr. Peter Miller
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Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

Guidance on Staff Support Groups

Section 1:

1.1 Introduction

This guidance is designed to facilitate the work of existing and new Staff Support Groups (SSGs) within Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) by setting out roles and responsibilities.

LPT is committed to embracing diversity and inclusion; recognising and valuing staff engagement.

1.3 Purpose of Staff Support Groups

The SSG’s will provide a channel for communication between management and staff; maximising the contribution and fulfilling the commitment to the Diversity and Inclusion agenda.

The groups will help and support local, regional and national initiatives and discuss any impact they will have on local activity. It’s a space where staff can feel safe, learn and raise the profile of development opportunities and access advice from peers.

SSG’s recognise the contribution of role model(s) and advocate(s) for making diversity and inclusion happen and empower staff by improving their knowledge.

Refer to Appendix A Model Staff Support Group Terms of Reference.

1.4 Benefits of Staff Support Groups

The Trust Pledge sets out the expectations of all staff to deliver high quality, patient-centred care which is at the heart of everything we do. There are key diversity and inclusion commitments highlighted in the Pledge.

The Trust recognises that not all staff are able to attend SSG activity. The Trust has developed a number of ways in which staff can participate.

Section 2:

Structure and Roles

2.1 Accountability of Staff Support Groups

The progress on each SSG will be reported to Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Workforce and Wellbeing Group.
2.2 The Lead Advocate

Each staff network will have a Lead Advocate. The Lead Advocate responsibilities are:

- to be a role model, a point of contact and to oversee SSG meetings;
- to ensure SSG members feel safe within the environment;
- to ensure the SSG mailing list is up to date, with the support of the Equality team;
- to raise awareness of the activities;
- to demonstrate good practice in raising awareness of Diversity and Inclusion agenda.

Each SSG will be supported by members of the group to help facilitate and co-ordinate activities, undertake administrative duties, develop and communicate actions and maintain the group mailing list.

2.4 Executive Staff Support Group

The Lead Advocate with group members will share best practice, any learning and issue/concerns. The aim will be to enhance the effectiveness and engagement of staff, direct concerns appropriately and consider development opportunities.

The dates for all meetings will be available via the dedicated LPT staff intranet, Email distribution, Twitter, LPT Closed Facebook group and Trust e newsletter.

Section 3:
Support and Resourcing

3.1 Budget and Expenditure

The Trust’s SSG are not provided with a specific budget. Each SSG will be required to put a case forward for financial support to deliver activity.

3.3 Procedure for authorising staff participation Staff Support Group activity

Lead Advocate will be entitled to additional protected time to prepare for SSG activities. Time must be agreed with the line manager in advance and a release form should be used (Appendix B). Managers should be given as much notice as possible. As a guideline this should be no less than 4 weeks’ notice.

Any staff member supporting the agenda will be entitled to time for attendance. The time must be agreed in advance with the line manager; no less than 4 weeks’ notice.

Reasonable time off with pay will be granted for recognised networking activities associated with staff support group(s) to attend training courses to enable them to undertake their duties. Time off in lieu may be granted as an alternative at the discretion of the support group member’s manager if attendance falls outside their normal working hours.
The support groups recognised members must give adequate advance notice of course dates in writing to the immediate line-manager and co-operate in making arrangements to try and cover jobs during their absence. Details of the course should be provided upon request.

Part-time employees who are required to attend recognised training courses as detailed above will be paid for the whole of their attendance time, even if it exceeds their normal working hours.

3.4 Procedure for requesting time to attend Staff Support Group Meetings

SSG members are permitted paid release to attend. In addition, any member can be released for one day a year (pro rata) to attend a conference related to the activities or training.

Any further hours may be taken as annual leave or unpaid leave. A request must be made to the line manager well in advance to ensure service continuity.

If a number of staff from one department requests to attend the same network meeting and it is felt that the needs of the service cannot sustain this then advice should be sought in the first instance from the Equality team. A fair approach needs to be taken, for example rotating attendance and allowing time in the workplace for feedback to colleagues and how it has made a difference to employment practices and service delivery.

In exceptional circumstances the Trust reserves the right to decline a request to attend a support group meeting if it will have a detrimental impact on the service. If this happens the reason should be clearly explained to the employee and the employee should be given the opportunity to attend the subsequent meeting (s).

Time to attend support group activities must be agreed with the line manager in advance and a release form should be completed in all cases whether the request has been accepted or declined (Appendix A). Once the Agreement form for Attendance at SSG meetings has been completed a copy must be given to the employee and copy needs to be sent to EHR Co-ordinator and emailed to equality@leicspart.nhs.uk

3.5 Meetings

By agreement with the Trusts, SSG meetings may be held on the Trusts or supporting organisation premises. Meetings are open to all staff members who identify themselves as that protected characteristic as well as ‘Allie’s’ supporting that protected characteristic.

3.6 Notification of Meetings
The SSG Lead Advocate will provide advance notice of at least 3 months of the dates, times and venues of any meetings to its members.

3.7 Facilities

The Trust will provide access to equipment and facilities to enable staff to fulfil their expected duties provided within the work environment.

3.8 Disputes

The Trust will make every effort to resolve disputes in relation to time off for attendance at SSG meetings. Where permission to take time off is withheld, the appropriate management representative will give an explanation for the reason(s).

If the individual is dissatisfied with the decision, the matter will be dealt with through making contact with the Equality team equality@leicspart.nhs.uk

Section 4:

Responsibilities

4.1

The Trust will work with Lead Advocates to improve relationships between managers and staff. A table of responsibilities can be found in Appendix A
Appendix A

Spectrum

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
Model Terms of Reference January 2018
Spectrum

Membership

Membership is open to all LPT [equality group] staff (full/part time); allies/.champion representatives e.g. Chief Executive, Equality and Human Rights team.

Purpose

- To provide a safe and confidential space in which issues of relevance to [Equality group] staff can be discussed openly and for staff to meet one another in an informal and safe setting.
- To work with LPT to eliminate discrimination and inequality particularly on the grounds [equality group], (Due Regard)
- To meet regularly with [equality group], colleagues, allies, and representatives from external partnerships and community groups
- To host meetings and events that promote our BME, LBG&T, Interfaith, Young People, Carers and Disabled SSG.
- Development, Reverse Mentoring, 1:1 coaching and specific [equality group] induction training for all staff
- To provide a gateway of advocate and assistance to [equality group] staff in the workplace including signposting them through internal processes or external services
- To promote cultural development events to celebrate e.g. [equality group] festivals/events engage with wider [equality group], community activities such [examples here]
- To support the public health messages in [equality group] communities and to influence service delivery and engagement with [equality group] patients.
- To ensure that [equality group], equality perspective is proactively considered by LPT.
• Compile an annual Action Plan for the [equality group], which will be regularly reported to Workforce and Wellbeing Group.

**Governance arrangements**

The [equality group], Support Group will consist of the following key roles;

a) Lead Advocates  
b) Advocates  
c) Representative from the EHR team.

Individuals will serve for three years and are elected on a rolling basis. Only full members of the [equality group], will be eligible to vote

**Quorum**

Network meetings have a quorum of two. Notifications of meetings will be listed at commence for the year and two weeks’ notice given using a variety of formats.

**To join the network**

To join the Staff Support group or request to attend any Staff Support Group meeting please contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Support Group Name</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First point of contact</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality and Human Rights Team</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:Equality@leicspart.nhs.uk">Equality@leicspart.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAPLE (Disabled SSG)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Advocate: Cheryl Holding</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:Cheryl.holding@leicspart.nhs.uk">Cheryl.holding@leicspart.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate: Naishali Chandarana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary: Wendy Loseby</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LPT Young Voices</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary: Kartik Bhalla</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:Kartik.Bhalla@leicspart.nhs.uk">Kartik.Bhalla@leicspart.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BME</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint Lead Advocate: Daniel Collard &amp; Asha Day</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:Daniel.Collard@leicspart.nhs.uk">Daniel.Collard@leicspart.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary: Rekha Passi</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:Asha.Day@leicspart.nhs.uk">Asha.Day@leicspart.nhs.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LGBT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead Advocate: Kartik Bhalla</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:Kartik.Bhalla@leicspart.nhs.uk">Kartik.Bhalla@leicspart.nhs.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Carers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>EHR team facilitate meetings</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:Equality@leicspart.nhs.uk">Equality@leicspart.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfaith Lead Advocate:</td>
<td>Sadhna Vaidya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Responsibilities

Each Staff Support Group and the Trust have the following responsibilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Support Group</th>
<th>LPT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To develop and publicise its aims and objectives and review these regularly to</td>
<td>• To consult with the staff support groups when reviewing or</td>
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<td>ensure that they meet the needs and expectations of members and the Trust.</td>
<td>developing relevant employment policies, procedures and</td>
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<td>strategies, and service developments.</td>
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<td>• Advising the Trust on development, consultation and implementation of policies in</td>
<td>• Actively engage the staff network in the development of policies and</td>
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<td>an appropriate manner to prevent them from negatively impacting on equality</td>
<td>seek advice on matters</td>
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<td>target group staff patients and clients. To be a source of information and</td>
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<tr>
<td>guidance for the Trust at a Senior Management level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop and publicise an annual work programme for the Staff Support Group and</td>
<td>• To support developments and help resource activities identified</td>
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<tr>
<td>review of past activities. Over/Summary of activity will be reported to Workforce</td>
<td>that will enhance all SSG agendas by identifying how best we can</td>
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<td>and Wellbeing Group by a representative of the Equality team. <strong>Appendix C</strong></td>
<td>run activities with no financial constraints to making it happen.</td>
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<td>shows an annual work programme and review template</td>
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<td>• To liaise with Union/Staff Side representatives on issues relating to Equality</td>
<td>• Has a responsibility to publicise the network and the importance</td>
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<td>and Human Rights in the workplace.</td>
<td>of participating in staff network activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To provide a mix of inclusive and exclusive, supportive and well-publicised</td>
<td>• To reflect the views and comments of the staff support groups in</td>
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<td>forum for employees who are covered by the aims and objectives of the group</td>
<td>Due Regard process that support relevant policies, procedures and</td>
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<td>strategy review and feedback to the staff support groups on the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>outcomes of consultation.</td>
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<td>• To provide an ‘open’ session available at meetings for those with an interest in</td>
<td>• Promote the networks to new (at induction) and existing employees</td>
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<td>the network’s agenda, or for speakers who are not members to attend.</td>
<td>and encourage managers to release employees to participate in them.</td>
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<td>• Advertise and communicate widely, using various mediums, e.g. Staff E Forum,</td>
<td>• Listen constructively and respond to employee concerns raised</td>
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<td>face-to-face outreach, email, phone, letters, to ensure that all staff are</td>
<td>through the staff support groups.</td>
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<td>aware of and have access to the activities of the group</td>
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<td>• To actively respond and engage with consultation opportunities that are</td>
<td>• To respond to equalities-related training needs of the wider</td>
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<td>relevant to the interest of the group members including participating in Due</td>
<td>workforce and service improvement actions as identified by the</td>
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<td>Regard activities</td>
<td>staff support groups.</td>
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<td>To raise issues of collective concern to group members with the Trust (or other NHS employer where member is external to the Trust) and act to address these concerns.</td>
<td>To organise an annual review meeting between Executive team and the Lead Advocates of the staff support groups and report progress back to the staff support groups on those issues discussed at the review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where an individual employment issue is raised, signpost the individual to HR Champion and other channels of support including, Occupational Health and Union representatives, Anti-bullying and Harassment Support Service.</td>
<td>Take part and promote initiatives developed by the staff support groups.</td>
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## Agreement form for Attendance at Staff Support Group Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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**Directorate and Service**

Manager to tick accepted or declined with reason, sign and date

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Declined &amp; Reason</th>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>Date</th>
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I request protective time as outlined above.

Signed by employee:
Date:

Once completed a copy needs to be given to the employee and a copy sent to equality@leicspart.nhs.uk
## Appendix C
Support Group Work Plan and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Work Stream</th>
<th>Action required</th>
<th>By Whom</th>
<th>Achievement Deadline</th>
<th>Success Indicator</th>
<th>Actions to be Taken Forward into Next Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>KB &amp; LK</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Learning</td>
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**Staff Network:**

Signed by Lead Advocate:
Date: