



[REDACTED]

14 July 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00513

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 13 June in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide the following information.

For the purposes of this request, "staff networks" includes any staff networks, employee resource groups, equality forums, or similar internal groups recognised, supported, facilitated, or coordinated by your organisation.

Please provide:

- 1. A list of all such staff networks currently operating within the organisation.*
- 2. Copies of any terms of reference, constitutions, governance documents, or internal guidance relating to those networks.*
- 3. Details of any funding, budgets, or financial support allocated to those groups during the 2025/26 financial year.*
- 4. Details of any staff time formally allocated for participation in network activities during contracted working hours.*
- 5. Your organisation's estimate of the total staff working hours spent attending network meetings or activities in the 2025/2026 financial year*
- 6. Your organisation's estimate of the cost of that staff working time, using the average hourly employment cost normally used for internal estimates.*
- 7. Details of whether any such groups are consulted on policy, recruitment, communications, equality impact assessments, or organisational strategy.*

Our response:

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does holds some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below and attached.

- 1. A list of all such staff networks currently operating within the organisation.**

UKRI currently has nine staff networks:

- Carers Network
- Disability Matters
- Early Career Network
- Multifaith Network
- Parenting Network
- Pride Network
- Racial Inclusion and Striving for Equity (RISE) Network
- Socio-economic Opportunity, Access and Representation (SOAR) Network (formed in 2026/27)
- Women and Gender Equity (WaGE) Network

2. Copies of any terms of reference, constitutions, governance documents, or internal guidance relating to those networks.

For the period of your request a governance framework of operations has been in place to support the Staff Networks. The Staff Network Framework of Operations and Engagement is provided with this response.

The framework is currently under review, and is expected to be published later in the summer. The revised version under review will align with Civil Service principles.

The Terms of Reference that are held for six of the nine networks are provided, no terms of reference are held for the remaining three networks. The Internal guidance available to staff, relating to the nine networks is also provided.

These documents are listed below.

- *Staff Networks Framework of Operations and Engagement*
- *RISE Network - Terms of Reference*
- *Disability Matters - Terms of Reference_Redacted*
- *Early Career Network - Terms of Reference*
- *Parenting Network - Terms of Reference_Redacted*
- *Our ways of working - SOAR Network Leadership Team*
- *UKRI Women's Chapter - Terms of Reference_Redacted* (now WaGE)
- *Internal Guidance for UKRI's Employee Networks_Redacted*

The exemption under Section 40(2), which relates to personal information, is considered to apply where UKRI staff are named within the documents and this information has been redacted. Disclosing this information would contravene the first Data Protection Principle as defined under Section 86 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

3. Details of any funding, budgets, or financial support allocated to those groups during the 2025/26 financial year.

In 25/26 an annual budget of £8000 was allocated - £500 per network to support activities such as events, meetings and resources, and an additional £4,000 for cross-network collaborative activities. The total spend for the financial year was £6,890. The available budget is subject to UKRI's budget allocations and is reviewed annually. All expenditure is required to have a clear business purpose.

4. Details of any staff time formally allocated for participation in network activities during contracted working hours.

The document provided with this response, "*Staff Networks Framework of Operations and Engagement*" includes information on staff time formally allocated to leading a staff network. All leadership team roles are voluntary and should be agreed with line managers, as noted in the framework. Co-chairs are allocated 1 day (0.05 FTE) per month each as allocated time to carry out network related activities, equating on average to 8 hours per month. Any additional time required should be agreed with line managers.

For networks that currently have more than two chairing roles, for example two co-chairs and a vice chair, the network will receive a total allocation of 0.1 FTE per month which can be split between the chairing individuals as required.

5. Your organisation's estimate of the total staff working hours spent attending network meetings or activities in the 2025/2026 financial year

This information is not held. Staff time working hours spent attending network meetings or activities are not recorded.

The FOIA provides a right of access to recorded information held by a public authority. It does not require public authorities to create new information or provide estimates to respond to a request, where these are not already held.

6. Your organisation's estimate of the cost of that staff working time, using the average hourly employment cost normally used for internal estimates.

This information is not held. No estimates relating to costs for staff time are held, as noted in the response to Question 5 staff time working hours spent attending network meetings or activities are not recorded.

As explained above, UKRI are unable to provide a response to this question as we are not required to provide estimates under the FOIA.

7. Details of whether any such groups are consulted on policy, recruitment, communications, equality impact assessments, or organisational strategy.

Staff Networks are not part of UKRI's formal consultation processes (e.g. like Trade Unions). However, they are engaged with to consider and inform the equality impacts of organisational activities. As outlined in the Framework of Operations, where reasonably possible, staff networks will be provided with the opportunity to engage with UKRI teams on activities and changes that directly impact on staff.

Staff networks are not part of the formal consultation stage with regards to policy reviews, however as policies are developed, staff networks may be included in the same manner as all other stakeholders in the consultation exercise to provide feedback. While staff networks are encouraged to participate in consultation and review activities to utilise their membership's voice across UKRI activities, it is not mandatory. Staff networks are expected to consider what is realistically achievable with the resource and capacity they have at the time of any request.

Your rights

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)¹.

Yours sincerely,


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Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
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¹ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>