

# Intranet Content for UKRI's Employee Networks

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## 1. Carer's Network

The Carers Network provides a safe space for UKRI colleagues with caring responsibilities to share information, socialise, support one another, and have their voices heard. We hope to drive the changes which are required for UKRI to acknowledge the circumstances that come with balancing work and caring responsibilities.

The network welcomes all UKRI colleagues without distinction, whether they are carers themselves or want to provide support to carers and their families in any way.

Join the Carers Network today to gain access to our monthly drop-ins, attend our regular events and activities, and join our peer support chat groups.

If you have any questions about the Carers' Network and how you can get involved, please don't hesitate to contact us at 

Who can join?

Everyone is welcome! Irrespective of whether or not you currently care for someone; whether you are uncertain if you are a carer; whether you know of someone who is a carer and you want to help; or whether you just have a general interest around caring.

Our mission

We provide a platform for peer support and guide change within UKRI to build a culture in which all employees with caring responsibilities, at any level, can feel comfortable and thrive personally and professionally.

We give carers a voice and raise awareness of what it entails to be a carer and its impact on employees, regardless of the caring role being undertaken.

#### Our goals

1. Support Carers: Make positive changes and ensure carers have a voice within UKRI.
2. Raise Awareness: Inform colleagues and managers about carers' roles and offer mutual support and encouragement.
3. Promote Inclusivity: Foster an inclusive environment and collaborate with other staff networks.
4. Create Safe Spaces: Provide a relaxed, non-judgmental, and safe atmosphere for sharing.

#### Our activities

- Monthly drop-ins for network members and interested colleagues.
- Working together with other Staff Networks and UKRI management to advocate for a set of policy reviews that define the role of carers within UKRI and raise awareness of the challenges that entails.
- Surveys and/or focus groups with UKRI carers to help establish key priorities for the network.
- Channels (MS Teams, dedicated email, Zoom groups for parent carers and carers of adults) to facilitate communication with and between members.
- Organising events and activities (e.g. Carers Week) to raise visibility within the organisation and facilitate contact between interested colleagues and the network.
- Take a look at our 2025/2026 action plan.

## 2. Disability Matters

Disability Matters is a staff network which provides both support and a unified voice for colleagues with disabilities, impairments, and health conditions across UKRI.

#### Our Mission and Vision

Our mission is to guide change within UKRI so that disabled people can thrive. We exist to provide support and be a voice for all disabled members of staff, colleagues who are

carers, and disabled people applying to work at UKRI. We will push for fair access to reasonable workplace adjustments, including assistive technology, across the whole of UKRI.

Our Vision - fMaximising.inclusion.to.drive.diversity.across.UKRI

Our vision is twofold:

1. We aim to champion and drive change for UKRI to become a fully inclusive employer with equal opportunities for all, giving disabled people and people with health conditions or impairments a chance to reach their full potential throughout their career.
2. We want to ensure that there is a consistent approach across UKRI for managing disability in the workplace.

UKRI can then truly make the most of the talents of disabled people within it's workforce. Read our network's strategy in the attached document to the left of this webpage to find out more.

#### Membership and Getting Involved

We welcome all employees of UKRI to join our network. You can:

- Fill in this form to join the network.
- Contact us at 

#### Join a Peer Support Group

We also have several peer support groups available for members to connect and share their lived experiences for support and advice. Please email us if you are interested in joining one or starting another group.

Together we can drive behavioural and cultural change within UKRI!

#### What We Do: Connect, Support and Improve

- We are volunteer-led and do what we can with the time available to us.
- We can connect you with peers for support from people with relatable experiences.
- We provide support in the workplace for disabled employees, e.g. how to access reasonable adjustments and how to have conversations with colleagues about your needs.

- We improve awareness of disabilities and promote an inclusive agenda across UKRI, for example by running events, working with senior leaders, and highlighting where improvements can be made.
- We do many other things, including arranging and providing input to training, working with colleagues across UKRI in the EDI Team and across the Staff Networks to embed an intersectional approach.

As a leadership team, we are committed to continuous learning to build our knowledge.

Please note we don't have the expertise, knowledge or authority to carry out specific EDI actions. This responsibility lies within individual HR teams or the UKRI EDI Workforce team. We are not experts in accessible design and cannot provide support for this.

### 3. Early Careers

We're an internal employee-led network by and for early career people with the mission of growing future leaders, supporting each other, and influencing UKRI.

This could be your first or fifth job in the public sector, or perhaps you're returning after a career break - either way the network aims to offer everyone the same opportunities to access development resources as well as the ability to broaden their network across UKRI.

On this page you can learn more about the network, what we do and the activities we run.

Watch our video to find out more about us and if you're interested, sign up below or contact us via our email [\[redacted\]](#)

Find out more about us

Our initiatives

Our membership represent the next generation of leaders, researchers and enabling colleagues within the UK's research and innovation infrastructure, our initiatives aim to equip them with the skills and experience you need to go from strength to strength!

Resources and Events

We are constantly building our catalogue of career development webinars and career journey interviews, designed to provide informal insights while celebrating talent across UKRI...

Professional Networking

We create opportunities to help you build your professional network in UKRI, giving greater context to your work and opening up future collaborative opportunities across the organisation...

## Development Opportunities

We advocate for early career development and work hard to signpost and create opportunities for you to develop yourself, whether through formal training,

secondments or voluntary roles...

## UKRI EARLY CAREER CONFERENCE 2023

Our first ever conference, delivered in November 2023, saw over 500 colleagues across UKRI councils come together for the first time to discuss career development.

We delivered the equivalent of 1,500 hours of training during the day and kicked off new connections at every level in UKRI.

## UPSKILLING AND CONNECTING MEMBERS

Through over 40 hours and counting of career development resources, including our Insights webinars and Pathways series, we showcase the variety of talent within UKRI while upskilling members and building out professional networks.

## SUPPORTING GROWTH ACROSS UKRI

We held a hackathon exploring growth and development within UKRI, using our members to gain a balanced view across councils, bands, and disciplines.

Three key ideas were developed to be taken forward by the UKRI Leadership & Learning and other teams.

## CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

With over 6 years of experience in creating development opportunities through our network, leadership positions within the ECN remain some of the best opportunities to build your network and skills through actively applying them in a whole new field.

## 4. Multi Faith

A network to provide support, share information and be a community to all UKRI colleagues, where there is an understanding of the richness and diversity of all faiths, beliefs and spirituality, and where we work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to increasing understanding and cooperation between those of different faiths and spiritual beliefs.

Below details our vision, values, mission and aims as a Network;

### Visio

People of different faiths and beliefs (spiritual and non-spiritual) coexist harmoniously and share information and personal understanding/ stories/experiences, working

together across UKRI for the common good. The network creates a wider awareness to benefit colleagues within UKRI and make it a more inclusive, equal and diverse workplace.

### Mission

Make UKRI a welcoming place for staff and stakeholders of all faiths and spiritual and non-spiritual beliefs.

We will strive to achieve this through:

- Raising awareness of different religious and spiritual traditions and practices
- Multifaith initiatives and events, supporting dialogue between faiths and religions
- Sharing good practice in people management and interacting with religious and spiritual colleagues.
- Creating learning opportunities for mutual understanding, appreciation and celebration of both the similarities and differences between all religions and spiritualities. This could be articles, talks, workshops and celebrations on-line and in person, Yammer chat etc.
- Supporting HR in producing EDI materials which include information on religion and beliefs, etc.

### Values

- Inclusiveness
- Valuing diversity
- Mutual respect
- Openness
- Honesty
- Trust
- Courtesy
- Integrity
- Understanding
- Respecting individuals right to dissenting opinions and their right to express these politely.

### Aims

- Showcase the multiplicity of faiths across the organisation.
- Be a guiding voice for inclusive workplace practices and policies.
- Support colleagues to be open about their faith/spiritual beliefs in the workplace, and form networks with other colleagues of similar faiths.
- Form links to external organisations that can support the work of the network.
- Create a code of conduct enabling open conversations

## 5. Parenting

What is the Parenting Network?

The Parenting Network is a forum for colleagues with childcare responsibilities to connect, socialise and support one another, with the aim of driving positive change within UKRI as a family-friendly employer. The Parenting Network is open to all UKRI colleagues but with a focus on those with parenting and guardianship responsibilities, as well as line managers and colleagues looking for guidance on parenting matters.

Find out more about our mission and aims and read our Terms of Reference.

Would you like to join our leadership team?

We are looking for a new Co-Chair. Please see Join the Parenting Network Leadership Team for more info.

Get in touch

You can contact us at any time through , or through the Teams channels.

Parenting lifecycles: transitions to nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary education

Events and resources ☐

Planning a family

Preparing for a child

New parents and guardianship and return to work

Working families

Join our discussion channel

We recently moved to Teams and have a number of channels dedicated to separate topics/communities/issues (Fertility Journeys, Mothers, Fathers, New Parents, Prematurity, Parents of Young Children, Teenagers). If you would like to join any please complete this form.

Family Matters - the Parenting Network blog

Our blog page can be found here: Family Matters - The Parenting Network Blog. We thank all our colleagues for sharing their stories with us and are always keen for more entries, as we all have experiences worth sharing that might be helpful to others! If you are interested in writing a post for the Parenting Network blog, then please email: [REDACTED]. We are happy to help with writing and editing.

Have a chat

The Parenting Network organises monthly Socials online, which offer excellent opportunities for members to connect, socialise and talk about the matters of importance to them. Our socials are informal events and people are welcome to join for a short time, or drop in and out around workload, so you don't need to make the whole session.

If you're in our mailing list, you'll receive invites and we'll let you know the theme. Please also let us know if you have any suggestions for themes.

Wellbeing

It's important to take care of our health and wellbeing, especially whilst on the family journey. UKRI offers a range of wellbeing support which you can find here: Our wellbeing ([sharepoint.com](https://sharepoint.com)).

You can also reach out to HR, in confidence, if you would like advice on your situation or UKRI's Employment Policies.

## 6. Pride

The Pride Network provides a voice and community for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and allies across UKRI. LGBTQIA+ is a broad term that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans\*, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic and other minority genders and sexualities.

What we do

To create the community that will be the foundation of our work, we organise opportunities both for discussing workplace issues and creating a thriving, welcoming space for all LGBTQIA+ colleagues.

The Pride Network creates a positive space for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and their allies, and provides support, guidance and a community space for all members. We work with and advise senior management and decision makers to ensure that policy and governance considers the needs of LGBTQIA+ colleagues both at home and abroad. We also organise events and celebrate days of awareness and remembrance.

If you have any questions about the Pride network and how you can get involved, please don't hesitate to contact us at [REDACTED].

#### Our mission

The Pride Network exists to further equality for LGBTQIA+ colleagues at UKRI. By creating a collective voice for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and allies, we aim to make our organisation a place where people of all genders and orientations can belong and thrive.

#### Our vision

We want UKRI to be a place where all LGBTQIA+ people have the option of living authentically in every aspect of their work lives. Whether in professional or social spaces, everybody should be safe, welcomed and respected, however they identify.

#### Key priorities

- Creating a sense of community among LGBTQIA+ colleagues and allies.
- Listening to the community so we can fulfill its needs.
- Engaging with policy making so that the needs of LGBTQIA+ colleagues are met.
- Educating UKRI colleagues about LGBTQIA+ workplace matters.
- Communicating LGBTQIA+ Matters in the workplace in a structured and compelling manner.

## 7. Racial Inclusion and Striving for Equity

The Racial Inclusion & Striving for Equity (RISE) Network has been set up to form a collaborative platform that supports Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic colleagues in UKRI to share thoughts, experiences, ideas and solutions and raises awareness to help all of us contribute towards a more inclusive workplace.

#### **Our vision**

Our vision for UKRI and beyond is for a vibrant and progressive future where race, nationality, ethnicity and/or culture does not define any person. We want to create an era of change; creating an enabling and supportive work environment providing equal opportunity for everyone to participate, be who they are and be powerful together.

#### **Our mission**

Our mission is for UKRI to be a leading research and innovation organisation that strongly reflects and respects the diversity of our ethnic workforce. We believe that the contributions of everyone makes and strengthens UKRI. We champion fairness,

challenge discrimination and pioneer innovative solutions to empower racial inclusion and strive for equity in the workplace.

### Key priorities

- Continuing to support and strengthen the efforts of the Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic activities across UKRI.
- Establishing and promoting the visibility of the network.
- Creating a safe environment where people feel empowered to have uncomfortable conversations.
- Encouraging members to join the network, making it relevant, useful and accessible to all.
- Engaging with and supporting the development of the new UKRI Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and key priorities.

### What we do

The group will communicate with members predominantly Microsoft Teams and email, with other sources to be considered as the network evolves. RISE will identify and develop networking opportunities within UKRI, for example via other Equality, Diversity & Inclusion groups.

We look forward to engaging with new members and allies, rising together!

If you have any questions about the RISE Network and how you can get involved, please don't hesitate to contact us at [REDACTED].

## 8. Socio-economic Opportunity, Access and Representation

The Socio-Economic Opportunity, Access and Representation (SOAR) staff network, established in spring 2026, aims to raise awareness, build a supportive peer community and embed socio-economic inclusion into organisational culture and practice at UKRI.

### Get involved

- Join SOAR by signing up to the network.
- Take part in our events, listed on the events page on The Source.
- If you are interested in joining our leadership team, email us at [REDACTED] - we are open to new leadership volunteers and are currently (May 2026) seeking an Executive Sponsor.
- Have a question or idea? Get in touch at [REDACTED]

Who is the network for?

Have you ever wondered about the difference between socio-economic background, socio-economic status, and class?

Do you have lived experience of coming from a background with fewer resources?

Or—perhaps the opposite—are you conscious of your more resourced background and interested in becoming an ally to others?

Do you feel these topics can still be taboo within our organisation and the R&I sector?

Would you like to learn more, share experiences, and connect with colleagues?

SOAR is open to everyone. Whether you are keen to know more about socio-economic diversity or actively work together to reduce barriers faced by staff from under-resourced socio-economic backgrounds – everyone is welcome.

You do not need lived experience of any specific social, economic or cultural background to join the network - an open mind and curiosity are enough.

Our vision and mission

Vision

We envision UKRI as a workplace where the richness of socio-economic diversity is openly recognised and valued, fuelling creativity and collective success.

Mission

Our mission is to help build an inclusive workplace where every voice matters and every colleague feels empowered to thrive – regardless of their socio-economic background or status. Through our shared commitment to inclusion, we aim to strengthen our culture and inspire positive change across UKRI.

We champion openness, embrace lived experience without stigma and contribute to fostering an environment where people from all socio-economic backgrounds and statuses feel safe to be themselves. By valuing diverse perspectives and talents, we create a community where everyone can contribute to UKRI's shared success.

We are committed to:

- breaking down barriers
- promoting equitable opportunities and visibility
- fostering a culture of belonging for people from different socio-economic backgrounds and statuses

This mission also extends to advocating for policies and practices that promote socio-economic equity and diversity within UKRI.

### Our inclusive ethos/culture

We are committed to building this network collaboratively, recognising that its strength lies in the voices and experiences of our members and the support of our volunteer Leadership Team acting as a collective.

As the network grows and evolves, so too will our strategy – shaped by ongoing dialogue, shared learning, evidence, and active member input. This inclusive approach ensures the network remains relevant, responsive, and rooted in the needs of our UKRI community.

### Network maturity

We will apply a continuous-improvement mindset to our planning and delivery of our activities, regularly checking in with members (via the registration form, at events and through customised surveys) to ensure our events, comms and engagement in UKRI-wide activity are representative, meaningful and engaging.

We intend to conduct a light-touch evaluation of the impact of our work once SOAR reaches a certain level of maturity when early network activities have been completed. This will be within approximately one year of the network being established.

### Our strategy and objectives

In our first year (until Spring 2027) we will focus on delivering objectives aligned with three core aims – each grounded in intersectionality as illustrated in the infographic:

1. raising awareness and educating
2. connecting and building community
3. advocacy and allyship, including feeding into UKRI-wide activities

Socio-economic background and status often intersect with other aspects of identity and protected characteristics. That is why intersectionality is central to our approach, and we will collaborate with other UKRI Staff Networks to spotlight these connections through joint events and communications.

### Objectives

Our initial objectives are as follows:

#### Raising awareness

1. Host events and share communications to raise awareness of socio-economic diversity and inclusion – especially around key dates such as Social Mobility Day and National Inclusion Week. Activities may include e.g. ‘lunch and learn’ talks with guest speakers, panel discussions and informal workshops.

2. Signpost relevant internal and external events and resources, including stories of colleagues that highlight lived experiences and allyship across all career stages. These aim to inspire, increase visibility, and provide role models.
3. Facilitate open conversations that celebrate the value of a diverse workforce, focusing on:
  - a) Definitions and terminology related to socio-economic background, status, and class.
  - b) The influence of economic, social, and cultural capital in shaping workplace experiences.
  - c) Intersectionality – how socio-economic background and status interact with other aspects of identity.

#### Connecting and building community

1. Facilitate informal discussion spaces – Host bi-monthly drop-in sessions (e.g., lunchtime chats) where colleagues can explore topics related to socio-economic background and inclusion.
2. Strengthen peer support channels – In the network's first year, we will explore enhancements to UKRI's peer support offerings. This could include voluntary buddy systems, randomised lunchtime meet-ups, and other forms of informal peer support with a focus on socio-economic inclusion and cross-organisational connection. The network could also provide information support to colleagues currently facing socio economic challenges, for example signposting help for those struggling with the cost-of-living crisis (e.g., food banks, other charities).
3. Promote development opportunities – Signpost relevant professional development resources and opportunities to network members, helping individuals grow and thrive regardless of background or status.
4. Collaborate across Staff Networks – Work in partnership with other Staff Networks to co-deliver intersectional events and communications for colleagues, recognising the interconnected nature of identity and inclusion.

#### Advocacy and allyship, including feeding into UKRI-wide activities

1. Support HR and senior leadership in driving positive change and increasing visibility and representation across the socio-economic spectrum at UKRI.
2. Gather feedback from members where relevant and appropriate, for example through surveys, events, and establishing a new shared network inbox to ensure perspectives are heard. Use aggregated and/or anonymized feedback to represent and advocate for our community of members to the UKRI Workforce EDI Team.

3. Contribute to delivery of the UKRI Workforce EDI Plan and other UKRI culture work by collaborating, sharing insights and experiences, and constructively challenging where appropriate – particularly to:
4. Promote a Workforce EDI campaign encouraging colleagues to declare their socio-economic data in Oracle Fusion, to contribute a better understanding of UKRI's workforce and therefore better, evidence-driven organizational decisions and actions.
5. Explore recommendations from the socio-economic diversity and inclusion employers' toolkit in partnership with the Workforce EDI team.

### Resources and support

### Why this matters

Socio-economic background remains a relatively underexplored area within UKRI, despite research showing that socio-economic background can significantly affect career progression and organisational culture in the UK. This network aligns with the UK government's social-mobility agenda and recognises the link between background, opportunity, and economic growth.

### What the data tells us:

- ground-breaking research by KPMG found that socio-economic background has the strongest impact on career progression — more than any other diversity factor
- in *The Class Ceiling*, the authors highlight how socio-economic background intersects with race, gender, and disability to deepen inequality
- in a 2024 talk to UKRI, Professor Sam Friedman noted that Higher Education is lagging behind — with only one university at the time tracking socio-economic data
- according to the Social Mobility Commission, working-class academics earn £5,807 less than their middle-class peers and socioeconomic diversity in the higher education workforce has flatlined
- just over a third of professionals are from working-class backgrounds, while 60% come from professional backgrounds - and though only 7% of the public were privately educated, they make up 71% of barristers, 43% of journalists, and 27% of CEOs (Social Mobility Commission, 2020)

Socio-economic background is not a protected characteristic (yet), but disregarding it comes at a cost. Some organisations are already taking action, for example KPMG is leading the way with measurable targets and top rankings on the Social Mobility Index.

Leaders of similar staff networks have highlighted how vital it is to start conversations around socio-economic background—often seen as the 'elephant in the room.' The co-founder of the Socio-Economic Equity Staff Network at Wellcome, who spoke at a UKRI session in 2023, shared how impactful the network has been in breaking down barriers, raising awareness, and fostering meaningful dialogue.

#### Resources

- Read Professor Rich Pancost's powerful blog about the impact of being from a lower socio-economic background on academic progression.
- BBC Two - How to Crack the Class Ceiling
- Does class inequality still matter? The Great British Class Survey ten years on (LSE Event Recording)
- Social Mobility Resource Library (Newcastle University)

#### What is socio-economic inclusion?

We all have different social and economic circumstances and cultural reference points – past and present. Socio-economic inclusion refers to including and welcoming individuals from all backgrounds, particularly those that are under-resourced, shaped by factors such as income and wealth, parental occupation, education, social connections, culture and neighbourhood.

Whilst not currently a protected characteristic under UK legislation, socio-economic background and status are important aspects of identity.

When using terms such as socio-economic background, status, class and culture, it is important to recognize that these concepts can be interpreted in different ways. While we are not sociologists or linguists, SOAR has developed a short glossary to support shared understanding.

## 9. Women and Gender Equity

The Women and Gender Equity Network (formerly known as the UKRI Women Chapter) is a staff network where everyone is welcome, irrespective of your gender or sex. If you care about gender equity and women's issues and rights and want to encourage an open and inclusive work environment, and be an ally to our cause, then we encourage you to join our network.

Gender equity is everyone's issue, and we all need allies to make equality a reality. Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognises that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Equality is the goal, and equity is the means to get there. When we embrace equity, we embrace diversity, and we embrace inclusion.

Our network wants to raise awareness far and wide, not just among colleagues who are female and/or identify as a woman.

#### Our mission

To inform and support UKRI to champion fairness, advance solutions to improve women's experience and achieve gender equity in our workplace.

#### Our aims

- To create a non-judgmental and safe space to discuss and contribute to solutions of issues faced by women and gender related issues.
- To support UKRI in creating a workplace culture where all genders are treated equitably and feel empowered, supported and can thrive.
- To ensure that everyone is welcomed, able to participate, and be listened to at our events and other network activities.
- To celebrate the contributions of people of all genders in UKRI to inspire future contributions and enhance workplace culture.
- To inform and support the improvement of relevant HR policies and practices and align to UKRI EDI strategy where appropriate to.
- To empower allies to advocate for gender equity.

We look forward to engaging with new members and allies of all genders.

If you have any questions about the Women and Gender Equity Network and how you can get involved, please do not hesitate to contact us at [REDACTED].