

Staff Networks at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

We recognise that the people who work for us are our greatest asset and when they feel supported and happy in work this positivity reaches those very people we are here for – patients. We are committed to creating a more diverse and inclusive organisation and ensuring that we harness the talents of all our staff fully.

One of the ways we wish to support this is through the development of specific staff networks that contribute to addressing and solving problems for all under-represented and disadvantaged groups and individuals within our organisation. At the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust We have **four staff networks**:

Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff network

The BAME staff forum was formed in 2014 to support black, Asian and ethnic minority staff and provide a safe, supportive and confidential environment for all minority ethnic staff to network.

The forum is intended as a platform for sharing ideas and experiences, and offers the opportunity to discuss issues of specific interests.

Our Mission:

- To provide support, guidance and sign posting where appropriate.
- To provide a safe environment for BAME staff to discuss and address issues related to them.
- To provide space to network, not only at a professional level but also on a social level through organised events.
- To build relationships between members, and other staff groups through events and joint work.
- To provide the opportunity to share experiences about working in the trust and improving workforce race equality standard.
- To promote race equality through active involvement and consultation on the trust's strategy, policies and guidance on race equality

The joint chairs:

Annette Heslop

Junior Sister/Charge Nurse
Joint Chair BAME Staff Network

Email: annette.heslop@nhs.net

Ron Agble

Director of Partnerships and Transactions
Joint Chair BAME Staff Network
Communicate

Email: r.agble@nhs.net

Information on Freenet:

The Network has a Freenet page where you will find information on the network, future events and the dates of the monthly network meetings.

[Access here the page on freenet](#)

Network email: rf-tr.bamenetwork@nhs.net

A message from the Board of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust:

"We are proud of the rich diversity of the Royal Free London and we do not tolerate racism and hate crime. The RFL is a place where we want all staff to feel safe, protected and listened to. We believe this is essential in ensuring that everybody who walks through our doors has the best possible experience."



Ability@the Free Staff network

The trust has a disability staff network in place to support staff with disabilities/long-term conditions.

Disability is defined as 'a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities'.

As with every health condition, disability will affect each individual differently. It may be present from birth, or develop at any stage during child and adulthood. Some people with disabilities may be considered 'clinically stable' as their condition and symptoms remain reasonably the same, others will have deterioration. Many have no name for their condition.

Many of the challenges faced by disabled people or those with long term conditions may be very similar. Themes such as accessibility, inclusivity, not having our voices heard, stereotyping and dismissive views are extraordinarily common in the public domain. The Network is created to hear your voices and find solutions.

The Ability @ the Free monthly network meetings are primarily a safe and confidential space for you to connect with others and with friends of the network. Ability @ The Free also works with the trust for the implementation of the NHS WDES standards to improve the experience of staff with disability/ long-term conditions. The Trust aims to empower the staff disability network to be more visible and support it with events and awareness raising such as inspirational speaker's events.

Our Mission

- Provide a safe, supportive and confidential environment for staff with disabilities to discuss issues relating to their disabilities.
- Provide a forum to discuss all aspects of working with a disability.
- Provide networking support.
- Contribute to staff development and awareness in relation to disability issues.
- Consult on health and well-being policies and initiatives.

The Chair of the Network:

Jan Eversfield

Clinical Nurse Specialist in Palliative Care Joint
Chair Ability@ The Free Staff Network

Email: jan.eversfield@nhs.net

We also have a **text group for staff with LTC/disability**: Please email Jan Eversfield in order to be added.

Information on Freenet:

The Network has a Freenet page where you will find information on the network, future events and the dates of the monthly network meetings.

[Access here the page on Freenet](#) If you require any further assistance or would like to join please email rf.ability@nhs.net

A message from the Network Chair Jan Eversfield:



If you have a disability and you are hesitating to register yourself as disabled on the Trust's Electronic Staff Record (ESR), I would encourage you to do so. Join our monthly meetings as we want to hear from you about what is positive and what is challenging so we can work together to think about solutions.



The Women's Staff Network

The Royal Free Group Women's Network provides a support system that helps women to grow and recognise their contributions. The Network aims to provide a space for peer to peer professional and personal networking and support for women.

Staff and male allies across the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust are welcome to join the Women's Network. More inclusion and diversity will enable us for better conversations, increased engagement, and faster progress as individuals.

We provide a space for women to come together to discuss a diverse range of topics in a supportive and non-judgemental environment. We organise a number of events and invited talks, networking sessions, and opportunities provided for mentorship to support the multifaceted lives of working women.

Our Mission

- Provide support links to encourage staff to access mentorship and coaching programmes.
- Reduce the Gender Pay Gap.
- Promote sustainable staff wellness and work/life integration.
- Motivate women to engage with the carbon reduction and environmentally friendly programmes.

The Menopause café

The Women's Network launched the Menopause Café in the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust from January 2022.

The Menopause Café events are open to all and we are aiming to encourage open discussions with no pre-set agenda, where the topics are chosen by the participants on the day. It is a network initiative to raise awareness on the subject and also to create time and space for the participants to discuss on the menopause without expectations or experts.

Access

The Joint Chairs:

Dr Premala Nadarajah BSc MB BS MRCS FANZCA
MSc RCPATHME Consultant Anaesthetist Medical
Examiner
Joint Chair Royal Free Women's Staff Network

Elizabeth Aryeetey
Head of Children's Nursing
Joint Chair Royal Free Women's Staff Network

Email: premala.nadarajah@nhs.net

Email: e.aryeetey@nhs.net

Information on Freenet:

The Network has a Freenet page where you will find information on the network, future events and the dates of the monthly network meetings.

[Access here the page on Freenet](#)

If you require any further assistance or would like to join please email rf.womens-network@nhs.net



LGBT+ & Friends Staff Network

The Royal Free London (RFL) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and non-binary (LGBT+) staff network was established in March 2014 and in February 2017 we launched LGBT+ Friends.

The network provides networking and support for LGBT+ staff and patient issues across the Trust and we believe in providing a safe space to building relationship through staff networking

The aim of the staff network is:

- To provide advice and guidance to RFL in its policy making.
- To provide advice and guidance to RFL on the general wellbeing of LGBT+ employees.
- To provide informal discussion on various issues raised by staff and the trust to improve the working environment.
- To foster and promote a safe and inclusive environment for LGBT+ staff, patients and visitors, linking in with the world class care objectives.
- To offer support to LGBT+ Staff.

The staff network feeds back into the equality, diversity and inclusion staff group on all matters pertaining to LGBT+ equality, diversity and equity of care. The informal monthly meetings are designed to be inclusive and support all our LGBT+ staff in providing quality patient focused care and services for all our patients, staff and service users.

The joint chairs:

Stephen Downer
Support Services Team Leader Mental Health First
Aider
Joint Chair, RFL LGBT+ & Friends Staff Network

Information on Freenet:

Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month at RFH or Barnet. Details are available on our [LGBT+ & Friends Freenet page](#).

Network email: If you require any further assistance or would like to join please email: rf.lgbt@nhs.net

A message from the Network Chair Stephen Downer:

Staff should feel free to be themselves at work. Life can be a struggle if you are dealing with LGBT+ issues alone, I know from experience. We are stronger if we work together. Please feel free to get in touch, either come and talk to us or send an email. All emails are confidential.





Speaking up

Sometimes staff may encounter a situation where they feel that the provision of care is lacking or any other malpractice (such as a risk to patient safety, fraud or breaches of patient confidentiality) may have occurred. All staff are encouraged to speak up about these situations or concerns openly.

Speaking up and raising concerns should be part of normal routine business for all our staff and that staff should feel confident both to raise and respond to concerns.

The trust has a speaking up pathway and policy in place which incorporates the recommendations from the Sir Robert Francis QC's final report following the Freedom to Speak Up review. There are six different routes that staff can follow to raise their concerns.

[A speaking up pathway is in place to help](#)

Speaking up Champions

Any member of staff can request to become a speaking up champion at the Royal Free. Training is provided by the National Guardian Office.

Please [access here](#) the full list of the Speaking up Champions.

What is a Speaking up champion?

Champions will be a point of contact for staff that require advice or want to raise a concern, to inform them of the options available, whether informal or formal and to direct individuals to the support available.

What are the responsibilities of a Speaking up champion?

- To work with others within the Trust to develop a culture where speaking up is recognised and valued
- Promote local speaking up processes and sources of support and guidance to staff
- Be available and accessible to staff who may have a concern
- To ensure that any safety issues raised are addressed and feedback is given to the member of staff who raised it in line with confidentiality agreements
- Communicate with empathy and compassion with other staff about potentially emotive subjects

Check the [Freenet page](#) for further information.

To get in touch with any of the champions or the speaking up guardian or if you would like to become a speaking up champion, please email the following address: rf.speakingup@nhs.net

