



Equality & Diversity in Local Councils

Diversity Ambassador Network – Terms of Reference

Context

Local Government has an important role in promoting equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. The regional Equality and Diversity Group has responsibility for the development of the overall strategic direction for equality and diversity initiatives in local government. A key feature of the work of the Equality and Diversity Group is the establishment of the Diversity Ambassadors' Network.

Vision for Local Government

To create a fully inclusive and diverse local government service where the workforce reflects the community it serves, where as a sector diversity and inclusion are recognised, supported, and celebrated, and where staff are comfortable to be authentically themselves in the workplace.

Objectives and Delivery

The objective of the Network will be to support Elected Member and Officer Diversity Ambassadors. Diversity Ambassadors will be supported to champion diversity and inclusion in their councils to create positive impacts on this agenda in services and local communities, specifically to:

- Continue to build capacity for Diversity Ambassadors
- Promote and encourage EDI agendas in individual councils including at Elected Member level, linking to the EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2024 – 2027
- To assist councils to improve cross departmental working within councils, (across Good Relations, Human Resources and Equality)
- To assist collaborative working across all 11 councils

The delivery of these objectives will be done by creating a forum for Diversity Ambassadors to gather and share best practice, engage with the work of others on this agenda, develop skills to support and influence innovative practices, and embrace the opportunity to work in collaboration with existing and new partners in the delivery of this programme of work.

Operational Arrangements

The Network will meet at least three times a year and will work in the following ways:

- Members of the Network are encouraged to suggest items for the agenda and to suggest expert speakers and key stakeholders to contribute to the Network
- Non-members may be invited to join the Network, permanently or temporarily, to aid discussions on topics
- Decisions will be made by consensus, but if that is not possible the Co- Chairs will make the final decision
- Diversity Ambassadors are expected to attend, and apologies should be given in advance where possible
- Hybrid Meetings will be offered with at least 1 meeting per year, in person only.

Membership

The Network will consist of the nominated council and NILGA Elected Member and Officer Diversity Ambassadors.

Chairing of the Network Meetings

The Network will be Co-Chaired by an Elected Member and Officer Diversity Ambassador. The Co-Chairs will ensure that the proper running of meetings in a timely, fair transparent and inclusive manner and will have the final say on the finalisation of minutes. Items on the agenda should be alternated between the Co-Chairs.

Location of meetings are to be rotated around each council area.

Accountability

The Co-Chairs be expected to report regularly to the regional Equality and Diversity Group on the work of the Network either verbally or through reports.

Secretariat

The Local Government Staff Commission will serve as the secretariat for the Network until 31 March 2026. From that point onward, the hosting council of each meeting will assume the secretariat role for the respective meeting.

Network Values

Members of the Network will:

- Treat all other Members with respect
- Act in a courteous and ethical manner at all times,
- Improve communication on and within Network
- Not disclose any matter that the Network is satisfied should remain confidential.

Review

The Network will review the relevance and value of the terms of reference and its work on a regular basis.

Co-Chair Role

- Both should be treated as equal in the role, Officer and Elected Member
- Co-Chairs should remain in place for at least 1 year
- Schedule of meetings to be approved at least 1 year in advance
- Meetings which are being held every 4 months should be hosted by a different council. Practical issues for the host council include ensuring ICT and accessibility are appropriate and hospitality is agreed with Co-Chair
- Pre-meetings should take place 2 weeks in advance of the meeting to agree the agenda items and liaise with secretariat
- The Co-Chair should make space for diverse viewpoints to be heard and support challenging discussions
- The Co-Chair should agree and track actions, communicating outcomes either prior to or the following meeting dependant on their urgency
- The Elected Member Co-Chair is encouraged to contact other Elected Member to encourage participation.