



Reading Borough Council & Brighter Futures for Children LGBTQIA+ Network

Terms of Reference

Last updated October 2024

1. Overview

This Terms of Reference document outlines the purpose, aims, and operational guidelines for Reading Borough Council (RBC) and Brighter Future for Children (BFfC)'s LGBTQIA+ Network. The Network's objectives align with, and contribute to, the broader organisational Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) strategies of RBC and BFfC.

2. Values and Principles

The LGBTQIA+ Network is guided by the following values:

- Inclusivity - Welcoming all employees, regardless of background or identity.
 - Respect - Fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding.
 - Confidentiality - Protecting the privacy of Network members and their participation.
 - Equality - Promoting fairness and equal opportunities for all.
 - Solidarity - Building strong support for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and allies.
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3. Aims of the Network

The LGBTQIA+ Network aims to:

- Create and sustain a safe and supportive community for LGBTQIA+ employees and allies, promoting equality and diversity in the workplace.
- Provide information and opportunities for employees to discuss LGBTQIA+ topics, share experiences, and network within RBC and BFfC.

- Collaborate with other networks across RBC and BFfC to support key themes that impact LGBTQIA+ employees and facilitate cross-network social events.
 - Act as a catalyst for positive change both within the organisation, with external partners, and with customers.
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4. Objectives

The Network seeks to:

- Influence the inclusivity of organisational policies and procedures.
 - Provide information and advice to employees on promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination.
 - Offer network members access to confidential guidance, advice, and support via named contacts.
 - Build a diverse and supportive professional network both within RBC and BFfC and with external partners.
 - Foster a supportive space for learning and professional development.
 - Provide resources and signposting on LGBTQIA+ related issues.
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5. Scope of the Network

The Network will focus on:

- Providing support and resources related to LGBTQIA+ matters in the workplace.
- Promoting awareness and understanding of LGBTQIA+ issues across the organisation.
- Supporting RBC & BFfC in their efforts to be inclusive employers.

Note: The Network will not offer legal advice but will signpost members to relevant resources or support services.

6. Membership

- Open to all RBC and BFfC employees who support its aims, free of charge.
- A core committee will develop and execute the annual activity plan.
- Members will be invited to events, receive regular updates, and are encouraged to give feedback on Network initiatives.
- Members are expected to maintain confidentiality, support the Network's aims, and promote its activities.

7. Governance and Decision-Making

- The Network operates under a committee, with decisions made by consensus or simple majority voting.
 - Major decisions may be put to the wider membership for input.
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8. Accountability

The Network will submit an **annual report** to RBC & BfC's senior leadership, detailing its activities, achievements, and future plans.

9. Co-chairs

- Co-chairs serve for a 12-month term, after which an open election will be held.
 - If no other members express interest, existing co-chairs may be re-elected.
 - In the absence of a co-chair, a member will temporarily fill the role.
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10. Roles and Responsibilities

The Network's steering committee includes the following voluntary roles:

- **Chair/Co-Chairs** - Lead the Network and represent its interests.
 - **Administration Assistants** - Manage communications, schedules, and organisational tasks.
 - **Event/Social Coordinator** - Organise events, meetings, and social activities.
 - **Welfare Officer** - Provide support and guidance to Network members.
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11. Meetings

- Committee members will aim to meet every six weeks, with additional meetings as needed.
- Decisions requiring a vote will be resolved by a simple majority of those present.
- General Network meetings will be held quarterly, with the agenda set by the co-chairs and, where possible, in consultation with committee members.

- A quorum of 3 committee members is required to hold a meeting or make decisions.
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12. Funding and Resources

- The Network will not have general access to an annual centralised budget provided by RBC & BFfC to support events, training, and promotional activities. Therefore, the network will need to fundraise where possible to support the network and events. Where possible the network should look to gain support with funding/ resources with HR, Communications & the Learning & Development Teams.
 - The co-chairs will be responsible for managing the budget and ensuring that resources are used effectively to benefit the Network's aims.
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13. Partnership and Collaboration

- The LGBTQIA+ Network will seek partnerships with other staff networks within RBC & BFfC, as well as external LGBTQIA+ organisations, to share resources and collaborate on events or initiatives.
 - Collaboration with external partners will be guided by the Network's values and the organisation's Inclusion & Diversity strategy.
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14. Code of Conduct

- Network meetings are intended to be non-judgmental and safer spaces. There is no obligation to disclose reasons for joining or attending meetings or events.
- Participation in meetings, mailing lists, or group chats is entirely voluntary, but all contributions and discussions must be respectful, especially where differing views are expressed.
- Discrimination or prejudice, including but not limited to transphobia, homophobia, racism, ableism, and sexism, will not be tolerated.
- Allegations of misconduct or breaches of this code should follow RBC & BFfC's Grievance Procedure.
- Attendees' participation in Network activities is confidential. Discussions, events, and attendance should not be disclosed outside the Network without explicit permission from the involved members.

15. Conflict Resolution

Any conflicts arising within the Network will be addressed by the co-chairs in consultation with the welfare officer. If unresolved, the matter may be escalated to RBC's HR department.

16. Review and Amendments

This Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Network's committee, with input from Network members. Amendments to the Terms of Reference will be agreed upon by a majority vote of the committee.