# Terms of Reference Guide

To set up a network, typically a Terms of Reference document is required. Some of this information will cross over with that in the Setting up an Early Careers Network Guide.

## First Steps

Speak to your HR Team about this. Your council might have pre-existing guidance and structures for completing a terms of reference.

Arrange a meeting with those interested in your network to discuss what you would like the purpose and aims to be.

## Typical structure

### Purpose

Why are you setting up the group? This will probably include information such as bringing together staff across the organisation and creating a supportive working environment. Who is the group targeted to and most applicable to?

Explain how your network will fit with your council, such as complementing the council’s commitment to EDI. Are there other networks that you could collaborate with on occasions to do this?

### Definition

Define your network’s key term. This will probably be ‘early careers staff’ of ‘young person’. It is up to you whether you define this by setting a limit on age or experience, or by the definition referring to someone that self-identifies as your key term.

Your HR team may have a stance on which is preferable.

### Aims and objectives

What exactly do you want to achieve in your network? Suggestions are:

* Peer to peer support
* Represent and share the thoughts of the network to influence policy and decision making
* Create learning and development opportunities
* To promote EDI issues and ensure that these remain central to the council
* Discuss and influence senior leadership regarding issues that those in early careers have
* Work with leadership and EDI staff
* Promote the retention of talent early in their careers

### Meetings

Set a minimum number of meetings per annum. Note that there may be more ad hoc meetings.

How long will meetings be and who will organise them? Will these always be chaired by the chair, or will chairing rotate?

How will the agenda be set? How can members contribute to this and will you have deadlines to contribute agenda items?

When actions are decided, how will you keep a log of these for transparency? How will you preserve confidentiality and maintain a safe space?

### Members and attendees

Who can become a member of the network? This will depend on your definition, although it is common for networks to allow anyone to join who feels that the network is applicable to them.

Will meetings only be for members? Networks can also let people attend meetings without being a member by coming as an ally.

### Democracy

This section will depend on your network’s structure so may require amending. It can follow the pattern below:

#### Chairs

* What are the roles and responsibilities of chairs?

#### Chairs election

* How regularly will you elect chairs and when? This may be done annually.
* How will you conduct the election?
* How can members register their interest for chair positions?

#### Organising committee

* When will they be elected? May be easier for elections to occur at the same time as the chairs’.
* Are there set roles? What happens if these are not filled or if too many people apply for roles? Will you have without-portfolio roles, and if so how many?

### Confidentiality

This may include information such as preserving dignity and respect, and echo any council policies you have.

### Reporting

Who/ what will your network report to? This may be a team or a board.

## Also consider

### Complaints

Should there be any complaints about the network, how will these be managed and addressed?

### Conduct

Is there a code of conduct for members to follow? Are there any other behaviours that your network will require to function?