



## DISABLED STAFF NETWORK

Thank you so much for your interest in The University of Manchester's Disabled Staff Network and for wanting to join!

Here is some background and information about our Network ...

The University of Manchester's Equality and Diversity (E&D) Team (<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/>) supports numerous network groups for members of staff: <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/staff-network-groups/>.

The Disabled Staff Network started in 2006/2007 when the University brought together staff who had disclosed a disability to consult us on its Disability Equality Statement (DES) – a legal obligation at that time. Quite quickly E&D wanted to give disabled staff autonomy over our own Network, and Hamied Haroon ([hamied.haroon@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:hamied.haroon@manchester.ac.uk)) was elected Chair. One of our first accomplishments was to gain agreement from our University to be one of the first in the country to provide dedicated advice and support for disabled staff, which had only ever been available for disabled students! Our Network grew and developed since then.

Information about the Disabled Staff Network can be found on the University's StaffNet pages at <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/staff-network-groups/disabled-staff-network-group/> and <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/personalsupport/disabled-staff/disabled-staff-network/>.

Our Network is represented on the University's Equality and Diversity Forum by the Network's Chair: <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/policies-and-guidance/equalitydiversityforum/>.

In November 2012, Professor Clive Agnew became "Champion" for the Disabled Staff Network in the University's Senior Leadership Team. This gave us a direct link with the decision-makers at the highest level.

In August 2013, Melanie Sharpe ([melanie.sharpe@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:melanie.sharpe@manchester.ac.uk)) was elected as Co-Chair of the Network, with Hamied.

Other roles in the Network are:

- Joint Secretaries: Janet Wallwork (since February 2011) and Gavin Park (since July 2014)
- Socials Coordinator: Loan Nguyen (since July 2014)
- Chair of the Conference Steering Group: Melanie Sharpe (since February 2012)

The Disabled Staff Network meets formally 3 or 4 times in a year. Our formal meetings often involve a guest speaker (external or internal) and a busy agenda! Lunch and refreshments are provided, and a palantypist attends to provide live speech-to-text reporting, all funded by E&D. We try to organise informal social get-togethers in between the formal meetings.

Our Network has led on a number of initiatives including:

- The University's Disability Equality Scheme and disability-related sections of its Single Equality Scheme
- Appointment of the first dedicated Disability Adviser for Staff, based in the DSO, in 2008
- "Accessible" Lunch Celebration for the International Day of Disabled People in 2010
- Policies and procedures separating disability-related sickness absence from general sickness absence
- Time To Change Organisational Pledge and Action Plan, signed by our University on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013
- "Achieving Your Potential", our University's first coaching and development programme for disabled staff, run by Result CIC in 2014
- "What Are We Hiding?", the first National Conference of the UK's disabled workforce, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014
- The National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN), launched at our "What Are We Hiding?" National Conference 2014
- A Joint Celebration with Manchester Metropolitan University for the International Day of Disabled People on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014
- A Stall on Mental Health in the "Brain" section of The Body Experience event, organised and hosted by the University's Faculty of Life Sciences at The Manchester Museum, on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015
- "Understanding Mental Health", a workshop for staff and students of The University of Manchester organised and held jointly with Time To Change, on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Within our University, we engage with:

- Conferences and Venues Office, including Chancellors Hotel
- Counselling Service
- Directorates of Estates and Facilities, of Human Resources, and for the Student Experience
- Disability Support Office, including the University Disability Consultative Group
- Equality & Diversity
- Faculty of Life Sciences
- Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences, including its Equality & Diversity Committee
- Social Responsibility
- SPORT, including the Wellbeing team
- Students and staff conducting research related to disability
- Students' Union, particularly its Disabled Students Liberation Officers and Society
- The Manchester Museum
- The University President & Vice Chancellor
- Undergraduate Recruitment & Widening Participation, including Student Ambassadors

Outside of our University, we have developed links with:

- Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's Disabled Staff Network
- DisabledGo
- Equality Challenge Unit
- Greater Manchester Universities' Sports For All
- Imperial College London, through its Calibre Leadership Programme
- Kate Green MP
- Manchester Metropolitan University's Disabled Staff Forum
- Museum of Science & Industry, Manchester
- Result CIC, namely Jane Cordell, Hormoz Ahmadzadeh and Andy Hilton
- Time To Change Campaign
- University and College Union, locally and nationally
- University of York's Disabled Staff Network

Some of the projects we are currently involved with are:

- A New Mental Health Awareness Public Engagement "Science meets Arts" Project

- Developing guidance on disability awareness for all members of the University
- Disability Awareness Training for the University's Counsellors
- Disabled teaching staff sharing their disability-related adjustments with their students
- Implementing and reviewing the University's Time To Change Action Plan
- Incorporating lived experiences of mental ill health in the nursing and medical undergraduate curricula
- Linking with UMSU Disabled Students Society
- Network socialising and informal peer support
- Organising sessions for staff and students to share personal experiences of living with mental ill health
- Raising the need for quiet/rest spaces for disabled staff and students around campus
- Raising the need to consider access for disabled staff as well as for disabled students
- Stonewall-style Workplace Equality Index Questionnaire for Disability-friendliness
- Working with Disabled Prospective Learners and Engaging Disabled Members of the Public
- Working with Manchester Trades Council and NW TUC on a Memorial to the late Alf Morris

Some of the recognition we have achieved:

- Advert on our Network in PossAbility Magazine, in 2013
- In February 2015, Inclusive Networks (@incnetworks) recognised us (@UoMDSN) as one of their #AwesomeNetworks!
- The University of Manchester held its first ever *Making A Difference* Awards for Social Responsibility on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015. Melanie Sharpe and Hamied Haroon were nominated by the Equality & Diversity Committee in the University's Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences for "organising and hosting" the 2014 "What Are We Hiding?" National Conference! To their utter shock, and against all the odds, Melanie and Hamied WON the Award for "Outstanding Contribution to Equality and Diversity (Staff)"!

The Disabled Staff Network has an active, confidential mailing list on the University's ListServ system ([DISABLED-STAFF@listserv.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:DISABLED-STAFF@listserv.manchester.ac.uk)). The Co-Chairs of the Network own and manage this list. All communications relevant to the Network are circulated on this list, including details of meetings and social get-togethers. Any member of the Network can post messages to the list. The Heads of E&D and the

Disability Support Office at the University are on this mailing list so that they can be made aware of issues when appropriate.

Please feel free to contact Hamied or Melanie on anything related to the Network. Please let them know if you would like to join the mailing list and/or if you have any queries. Hamied and Melanie share the Network's generic email address: [DSNetwork@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:DSNetwork@manchester.ac.uk).

The Disabled Staff Network is on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UoMDSN>.

We look forward to your involvement!