



Press release

For immediate release - 12th February 2015

Inclusive Networks announces their inaugural 'Awesome Networks'

Inclusive Networks, a hub for celebrating diversity and inclusion, is delighted to publish their inaugural list of forty Awesome Networks. The first list of its kind, it aims to celebrate the positive impact that network groups of all types and from all sectors have and also thank those people who selflessly coordinate the networks, many who do this on top of their day jobs.

Networks are an integral part of the diversity, inclusion and engagement agenda in many organisations and play an important role in providing a welcome space for their members to meet new people, network, offer opportunities to increase their members knowledge and understanding of many topics as well as supporting with business, career and professional development. It's only right that we celebrate their inspiring and important work and the positive impact they have. There are also many groups and organisations who facilitate valuable networking events and these should be acknowledged and rewarded too.

We wanted to hear about networks that have done something special in 2014. This could have been hosting an inclusive event that was a real highlight, supporting an internal or external initiative, making a positive difference to the workplace or beyond, influenced changes, fundraising for charity or just generally being awesome through the work they do. Everything they do should be to support a more inclusive society where diversity is celebrated and their members feel they can be their full selves when engaging with the network.

Following nominations, the list represents the diversity of network groups all across the UK, ranging from employee networks including the 'Focused Women' network at RBS and 'Celebrate', the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) network at charity Action for Children to the 'City Sikhs Network', an organisation run by Sikh professionals to create positive change within society and to help create a more connected world.

We know we have only touched the surface with our first list and we know there are hundreds of other networks doing wonderful things all over the UK. With lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) networks generally having a greater and more active presence on social media, the inaugural list has strong LGBT network representation. There is a clear under representation from some diversity strands and we hope to see nominations for many more networks of all types as more networks and organisations become aware of and get behind the 'Awesome Network' recognition. We'll be working closely with organisations all over the UK to encourage this.

To view the full list of Awesome Networks, visit www.inclusivenetworks.co.uk/awards/awesome-networks-2015/

Thomas Anderson, Inclusive Networks Founder and Chief Executive, said:

“The diversity of the nominations received in our first Awesome Network list is a celebration of the many authentic networks around the UK that have each made their mark and have a real positive impact on those people who engage with them, and in many cases, the communities where they operate. I’m thrilled that there is representation from many diversity strands and sectors and I look forward to seeing the list grow. From my personal experience, it is very clear that networks of all types can enhance the lives of those people who engage with them, as well as be of great value to the organisations that many of the networks represent.”

“More and more organisations are seeing the value of investing in network groups. That’s a great thing as we know that many people are attracted to organisations who have visible and active network groups or visibly support them. They also have a positive impact on employee engagement and staff retention. They really shout ‘that’s a great place to work, where all employees are supported, can be themselves and there is investment and commitment to workplace inclusion’. It makes business sense to support visible network groups.”

Speaking to Inclusive Networks, **Nicky Morgan MP**, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, said:

“It’s clear that network groups can make a very real contribution to the workplace, helping create a culture which values diversity and attracts the best talent. It is of course up to individual firms how they recognise the work that network groups do, both inside and outside of the organisation, but I would certainly encourage any company to reward staff who give something back to the workplace and their communities.”

“We know that networks are important – we’ve seen how the ‘old boys’ network’ used to dominate the workplace at senior levels. Luckily, things are now changing and there is much more diversity in the world of work. However, there is still a lot of benefit from both formal and informal networks.”

Don’t be disappointed if you missed the deadline or your network is not recognised in the first unveiling of your Awesome Networks. You can still nominate up until 11:59pm on 28th June 2015 and we’ll be announcing the second and final 2015 Awesome Networks in July.

If you know of a network you think is awesome and should be recognised and celebrated, then let us know about them. For more information visit www.inclusivenetworks.co.uk/awards/awesome-networks/

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Notes for Editors:

Launched at the end of October 2014, Inclusive Networks aims to bring networks, charities, community groups and inclusive employers of all diversity strands and sectors together, to learn from each other, to share, to collaborate and most importantly, to celebrate the many successes of network groups, the people who make them come alive and the employers and organisations who support them and help them flourish. A vibrant feature and interview driven website is updated frequently and a bi-monthly online magazine, ‘Network Buzz’, is produced by Inclusive Networks.

A number of quotes from our Awesome Networks can be found at www.inclusivenetworks.co.uk/awards/awesome-networks-2015/

High resolution logos are available on request.

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Awesome Networks 2015

Celebrating the work of network groups of all diversity strands, from all sectors and from all over the UK. The list is presented in alphabetical order by the organisation the network represents.

Action for Children : Celebrate - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Amnesty : Amnesty UK LGBTI - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) network

ASDA : ASDA LGBT - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Barclays : Spectrum - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

BBC : BBC Pride - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

BNP Paribas : Parents & Carers Network - Parents and carers employee network

Cardiff University : Enfys - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) network for staff

Citymothers & Cityfathers : Providing a networking forum for working mothers and fathers

City Sikhs Network : An organisation run by Sikh professionals to create positive change within society and to help create a more connected world

City Women Network : A vibrant community for senior professional women to connect, contribute and grow

ConnectED : Based in Edinburgh, a relaxed environment where people can meet, chat, connect and start to build business relationships

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service : Fire Pride - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Employers Stammering Network : Support network for employers

EY : EY Sikh Network - Sikh network for employees – their events are open to everyone!

Fathers Network Scotland : Meet the changing needs of families and fathers in Scotland with practical services including training, events, peer support and research

Forward Ladies : Unlocking the potential in professional women through networking events and beyond

Glasgow University : KC Soc - A sacred space for students to attain wisdom to lead a successful and happy lifestyle

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) : Pride Network - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

IBM : EAGLE - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Inter-Law Diversity Forum : Forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) network groups

John Lewis & Waitrose : Pips (Pride In Partnership) - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Leicestershire Police : Leicestershire Police LGBT Network - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Manchester University : Disabled Network - Disability network for employees and students

National Older LGBT Housing Network : Open to members of the LGBT community, the housing sector and the wider third sector

Nationwide : SOLCATS - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Nottingham University : Disabled Network - Disability network for employees and students

Ogilvy : Ogilvy Pride - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

PwC : GLEE@PwC - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) network for employees and clients. Everyone is welcome!

RBS (Royal Bank of Scotland) : ENABLE - Disability network for employees & Focused Women - Women's network for employees and clients & Rainbow - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee network

Royal Navy : The Naval Servicewomen's Network (NSN) - Women's network for employees

ScienceGrrl : A group of people who are passionate about celebrating women in science and passing on our love of science to the next generation

SWAN : Scottish Workplace Networking - Networking events aimed at lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people – everyone is welcome!

TESCO : OUT at TESCO - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) employee network

The Co-operative Group : Aspire - Career network for employees

The Girls' Network : Inspiring and empowering girls from the least advantaged communities through connecting them with a network of positive female role models

UK Parliament : ParliOUT - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ) employee network for Lords, MPs and parliament staff

Village Bakers : Manchester based networking group who's aim is to bake, share and eat with friends old and new

York University : Disabled Network - Disability network for students