



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

UHSussex Staff Networks

Our 20,000+ workforce is as diverse as the patients we treat, and we celebrate that diversity. We offer a wide range of staff networks including the Armed Forces Community, Carer's Network, Disabled Staff Network, LGBTQI+ Network, Religion and Belief Network, SOAR BAME Network and Trans and Non-Binary Group.

Armed Forces Community

- Connects members of staff from our Armed Forces community to provide mutual support and advice on all matters related to service, either in the military or in the NHS.
- We aim to provide expertise and mentorship to anyone who wishes to support our Armed Forces community.
- We also provide support to community members who may need an extra shoulder when and where they need it.
- Our membership is inclusive across all employees, patients, relatives, students, volunteers and other on site workers who may have an interest. We actively encourage members of the Trust to become service champions.

Veteran Aware

In Sussex we are proud of our military heritage. We will ensure that military veterans and their families face no disadvantage when accessing our services.



If you have served in the military, please let us know, so that we can better serve you.

We are a Veteran Aware Trust. This means we are leading the way in improving veterans' care within the NHS, as part of the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA).

Our commitment: the Armed Forces Covenant

We are proud to have signed the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, treated fairly.

We signed the Armed Forces Covenant in January 2019 and renew our commitment every year. We will ensure that members of the armed forces community have the same access to our services as any other citizen.



Supporting staff who serve in the armed forces

We are lucky to employ a significant number of serving military personnel.

Some of our staff are members of the Reserve (part-time) forces. Reservists give up their spare time, outside of their normal NHS role, to serve in the armed forces.

We also host regular military personnel in our hospitals. This enables military nurses and doctors to gain experience and skills within various teams such as our Major Trauma Centre, Critical Care, Theatres, Anaesthetics and Trauma & Orthopaedics.

We offer many incentives to our serving armed forces personnel, including:

- Two weeks extra leave for annual deployment exercises
- A dedicated Armed Forces Policy
- Access to our occupational health service, including self-referral to counselling.
- Membership of our dedicated UHSussex Armed Forces Community
- Armed forces drop-in sessions
- Military induction for cohorts of regular military personnel
- Support from our armed forces community
- Mentoring new Reserve recruits where necessary
- Collaboration with local Reserve units on deployment, training and education.

If you are an employee of the trust and a Reservist, contact your armed forces champions or e-mail below to find out about the support available to you.

You can find further information and links to resources on [Armed forces - University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust \(uhsussex.nhs.uk\)](https://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/armed-forces)

Network Lead, Lt. Colonel Ben Caesar via: uhsussex.armedforces@nhs.net

Carers' Network

A UHSussex staff network for Carers is in development. In the meantime you can get in touch with the Carers' Hub.

This is a self-refer service and you can be referred by:

1. Contacting the Carers Hub on 01273 977 000
2. Completing the simple and quick referral in the following links:

For professionals: <https://carershub.co.uk/services/services-for-professionals/making-a-referral/>

And for carers: <https://carershub.co.uk/services/services-for-adult-carers/self-referral/>

You will then receive an information pack and a follow up phone call to discuss what might be helpful and to carry out the initial carer's assessment if the carer would like to do so.

Disabled Staff Network

Our Disabled Staff Network is for all members of staff at UHSussex who define themselves as having a disability whether hidden or not.

The DSN supports and empowers those covered under the Equality Act 2010 – by providing regular meet ups, newsletters and providing support and advice.

Our aims include:

- Improving the understanding of what is a disability and who might be covered by the Equality Act 2010.
- Using member feedback to suggest project/workstreams to improve disability equality within the workforce.
- Growing the network, including allies, and achieving equality for those covered under the Act.

How our members benefit

In addition to helping to remove isolation barriers for our disabled colleagues, we provide ongoing support to each other – or ad-hoc when it's needed – on Trust policies and getting help.

We hold regular group meetings to provide staff with a safe space to discuss common issues or concerns in relation to disability in the workplace and an opportunity to share their experiences and any resources or information that have helped them. It's also an opportunity to meet and collaborate with others to offer ideas on what services the Trust could provide to staff with disabilities and an opportunity to feed any suggestions to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team for consideration.

What we're proud of

- Successfully campaigning for a staff Health Passport

- Arranging guest speakers to attend meetings to look at various aspects of the disability agenda
- The support we provide and the forum we've given to everyone who wants to know about disability issues – face-to-face and via MS Teams.

Network Lead, Marce Johnson via: uhsussex.disabilitynetwork@nhs.net

LGBTQI+ Network

Our network ensures LGBTQI+ colleagues and patients are protected, respected, listened to and represented at the UHSussex. We're a group of LGBTQI+ staff and volunteers. We work in all roles and at all levels in the Trust. The plus symbol (+) in our name is a way of acknowledging all Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities (incl. non-binary identities, and intersex individuals). We also welcome all non-LGBTQI+ allies who share our commitment to equality and inclusion.

What's the aim?

We volunteer our time, experience and expertise to:

- Continually improve the experience of UHSussex for all LGBTQI+ staff and patients.
- Ensure that all LGBTQI+ voices are consistently, effectively, heard and represented.
- Promote social and informal networking, strong working relationships and friendships.
- Help our Trust become known as an 'inclusion employer of choice'.
- Stand up for the rights and freedoms of all LGBTQI+ people.

Why?

- NHS organisations have legal and regulatory (e.g. Care Quality Commission) obligations for equality.
- Organisations that are diverse, inclusive, fair, and free from harassment and discrimination have been shown to provide the best experience for staff and volunteers – and a more motivated and engaged workforce.
- Research also shows that staff engagement is linked to best and safest care for patients.
- Ultimately, our work is about best patient care – our 'True North'.

What we do

- Provide confidential support to all employees on LGBTQI+ issues.

- Organise social, networking and sports events.
- Advise on Trust policies and training – so they're inclusive and supportive of LGBTQI+ staff.
- Celebrate LGBTQI+ history, lives and contributions (eg. LGBTQI+ History Month, Trans Awareness Week).
- Organise UHSussex @ LGBTQI+ Prides all over Sussex, Trans Pride, Disability Pride.
- Run programmes relevant to LGBTQI+ staff (eg. health & wellbeing/mental health, LGBTQI+ Mentoring).
- Produce a monthly newsletter.
- Work closely with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team, and Trust Charities.

Why get involved?

- It's a great way to meet new people, network and feel part of a community.
- It's our chance to support LGBTQI+ colleagues – who maybe aren't yet 'out' at work, or need advice with being LGBTQI+ in the workplace.
- It's interesting, a chance to learn and develop, and we have a lot of fun.
- It's a way of getting involved and helping the Trust be the best we can for LGBTQI+ people.
- And whatever our work role, this is all about best care for our patients/ service users.

Network Lead, Merle Symonds via: uhsussex.lgbtqinetwork@nhs.net

Follow on Twitter: @UHSussex_LGBTQ

Religion and belief Network

This is a new network that leads on religion or belief issues in the trust and local health community and we work in partnership with faith groups and various organisations.

Our aims are to:

- Provide a framework in which to support and monitor the religious or belief needs of patients, relatives and colleagues.
- Provide a forum for patients and colleagues to approach regarding their wellbeing and care in and around the issues of religion or belief.
- Provide a network which celebrates all religions and beliefs.

How our members benefit

- We ensure that UHSussex supports and encourages all colleagues and patients in their spiritual well-being.
- Our colleagues/patients have a safe space where they can explore their concerns and anxieties without fear of judgement.

What we're proud of

We support our colleagues and patients in various ways such as the creation of the Sanctuary at Worthing hospital and provision of ablution facilities for Muslims. A new temporary sanctuary space has also been created at the RSCH.

We support our Muslim colleagues during Ramadan with water and dates.

Network Leads, Joanna Elliott and Rachel Bennett via:

uhsussex.religionandbeliefnetwork@nhs.net

SOAR Network

SOAR = Safe space, Opportunity equity and empowerment, Amplify voices, Redress the balance.

Our SOAR Staff Network supports the Race Equality Agenda through active engagement and involvement across UHSussex by working to improve the experience, career prospects, opportunities and general working conditions for our colleagues.

Our aims

One of our ambitions is to make talking about race something that is natural and common place through engagement and education through both our allies and BAME staff network groups.

How our members benefit

- The network provides a recognised and supportive space where concerns can be raised and colleagues can get help and support.
- A number of members are BAME volunteers, equipped to signpost colleagues to the appropriate support and provide Mental Health First Aid in some areas.

- Our group is both culturally and professionally diverse, creating great opportunities to network, learn and develop!

What we're proud of

- We helped to facilitate conversations and activities to support the uptake of the Covid vaccine. The proportion of BAME staff vaccinated at UHSussex is above the national average.
- Some of the best practice and experience has been shared across our ICS to improve health outcomes for our local populations.

Network Lead, Patience Mugawazi via: uhsussex.soarnetwork@nhs.net

Trans and Non-Binary Group

Respect and inclusion are core values at UHSussex, which help create an inclusive culture that values diversity and empowers everyone to be their authentic self at work. This includes celebrating differences and always taking the time to listen, and learn, from staff and patient experiences and perspectives.

In 2021, UHSussex became one of the first Trusts in the country to start using gender inclusive language for trans and non-binary people accessing maternity services. Last year, the Trust introduced the optional choice to add pronouns to staff name badges.

Helping to enable and empower colleagues to be more confident in engaging with trans and non-binary patients and staff, Sarah O'Brien-McLean has spearheaded a trans awareness training module available for all staff. They also lead an informal, monthly meet up, which is open to trans and non-binary staff, students, volunteers and associates.

You can reach Sarah, the trust's Trans and Non-Binary Lead, at their dedicated e-mail address for an informal conversation or to get details and join the monthly meeting. LGBTQI+ is the parent network of Trans and Non-Binary group, sign up to the LGBTQI+ mailing list to stay updated on everything.

Get in touch with Sarah O'Brien-McLean: uhsussex.tnbcorrespondent@nhs.net