

Local

Have an initial discussion

Once you've got a small group of registered managers who want to participate (it doesn't need to be more than five or six people), you can decide on outcomes and a structure for the network.

Have a planning meeting – outside work if you need to, and use this time to discuss things like:

- your experiences of other networks
- your ideas for the network
- what you'd like to get out of the network
- the kinds of things you'd like to know more about in relation to your role – e.g. the inspection process, adult safeguarding, etc.

If you want to access information (or find a speaker) on a particular subject, your locality manager can help you do this.

Decide your aims, objectives and ground rules

The terms of reference (which are the same for all networks) can help with this and you can of course add to them. You should also think about some group rules which answer questions like – how will:

- your network maintain confidentiality?
- the network work inclusively to ensure all feel comfortable to contribute and conversation isn't dominated?
- (if you decide to broaden attendance to some non-registered managers) you ensure the network remains a 'safe space' for registered managers?

Getting up and running

Network contact details

The chair

Publicising the network

Local papers, alongside social media and sector organisations, can all help here.

Could you put a press release or note in your local paper; especially if one of your network members has a “good news” story to share?

How could you use Facebook or Twitter?

Your Skills for Care locality manager will be on hand to help spread the word; they can include network details in newsletters, on the Skills for Care website and can talk about the network when they are meeting other registered managers.

Holding meetings

The first meeting

Before anything else, decide on the frequency of your meetings and consider how these fit with school or other holidays, which may make it difficult for others to attend. It may also be worth considering if local managers would find it useful to know the meeting dates for a full 12 month period? Once you've decided where and when your first meeting will take place, send out:

date, venue and times

your aims and purpose for the meeting

the terms of reference

the frequency of meetings.

Meetings

Try to reach a balance at meetings between formal and informal discussions, encouraging input from all. Start each meeting with introductions and asking for any other business (AOB). What happens next will depend on the format of the meeting.

You might want to:

break the meeting up into an initial discussion of key local issues

hear from an invited guest speaker

form a number of small groups focusing on different subjects for the meeting (feeding back to everyone at the end).

Alternatively, you could give the meeting over to a specific issue that someone chooses to bring to the network. Remember, a good network Chair observes, listens, reflects back to the network.

On-going activity

If you run a network, you will:

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