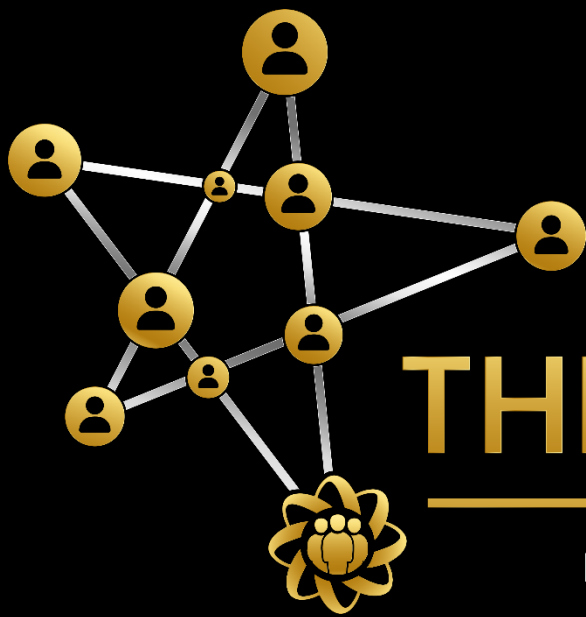




THE STELLAR
STANDARD
MAKING WORK BETTER

Guidance Pack

www.stellarstandard.co.uk



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The UK's Staff Networks Stellar Standard

What is the Stellar Standard?

The **Stellar Standard** [*The Standard*] is the premier, annual national recognition that honours and celebrates the outstanding contributions and achievements of staff networks.

It is an exciting new measure that staff networks or employee resource groups (ERGs) can use to **benchmark their learning, effectiveness, and performance to date**. The Standard also serves as a **maturity guide** and **indicator of good practice**, demonstrating how networks are meeting their members' needs, benefitting the wider organisation, and building progressive relationships with other stakeholders.

The Standard offers **insightful learning** for all participating networks by highlighting the rich contribution of the staff network community to businesses, organisations, and wider industry across all sectors in and beyond the UK.

Why Do We Need a Stellar Standard?

It's both an exciting and challenging time for the networks community. Over the last decade, the discourse around the power of staff networks has evolved exponentially. Covid-19 further highlighted their value and shone an even brighter spotlight on the influence and impact of staff networks within organisations.

This heightened attention has encouraged more organisations to **invest in their staff networks** — recognising their vital role in shaping culture, inclusion, and belonging.

Effective staff networks bring **insight, experience, and intelligence** that help organisations navigate change, drive engagement, and build support for transformation. They devise **practical, creative, and commercially viable solutions** to address systemic challenges and foster inclusion.

The Stellar Standard recognises those networks putting this into practice and encourages others to continue making work better.

Just Another Award?

While there are growing numbers of EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) awards, the Stellar Standard is **not an award** — it is a **benchmark**. It recognises and raises the standard of activity and impact for staff networks across all sectors. Recipients will have demonstrated progressive results in workforce outcomes and transformative impact in workplace culture, service delivery, or product outcomes.

Networks receiving The Standard will have proven an **acquired level of excellence** for their specific contributions and demonstrated their organisation's **commitment to improving the employee life cycle and making work better**.

Who will be assessing the applications?

Our esteemed panel of assessors brings a wealth of experience in working with and leading a variety of mature and effective networks across different sectors.

Who Can Apply?

The Standard is open to all **staff networks in an organisation** — from new and emerging to long established — in any sector.

To apply, your organisation must:

- Confirm that the nominated network has existed for **at least six months** and comprises employees from the same organisation
 - Provide evidence to support any nominated submissions (when requested)
 - Ensure that examples clearly show the network's specific role in achieving reported results.
 - If shortlisted for the final stage, agree to have **two to four representatives** from your network present to the panel of experts w/c 23rd March 2026
 - If selected, have at least one representative attend the recognition ceremony on **Wednesday 13th May 2026**
-

Why should organisations care about the Stellar Standard?

The Stellar Standard is supporting organisations to get their networks to a point where they're able to demonstrate excellence, collaboration, and sustainable impact.

Who benefits	How
Employees	Staff networks create safe spaces for staff to be heard, represented, and valued — fostering belonging, wellbeing, and retention. The Standard ensures continued quality and recognition of this work.
Chief People Officer	Networks provide insights, challenge, and innovation that enhance diversity practices, workforce strategies, and engagement.
Finance Director	Networks help build inclusive cultures, reducing costs associated with recruitment, absenteeism, and tribunals.
Board & Key Stakeholders	Effective networks increase productivity, innovation, and engagement. They also strengthen client relations, community engagement, and talent pipelines.

What Will Stellar Standard Recipients Demonstrate?

Recipients will show how they have:

- Supported their members effectively
- Contributed to organisational diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Enhanced employee engagement and culture
- Achieved tangible, transformative outcomes for their members and organisation

...and in return, networks (and their organisations) receive:

- Certificate of acknowledgement
 - *Recognition of excellence*: Demonstrates a proven commitment to high-quality standards and impact.
 - *Enhanced credibility*: Builds trust among stakeholders, partners, and funders
 - *Continuous improvement*: Encourages reflection, learning, and innovation within the network.
 - *Increased visibility*: Highlights the network as a leader in its field, attracting collaboration and opportunities.
-

How Does It Work?

The **Stellar Standard Assessment Process** has **three stages** (see diagram below at annex B).

1. **Stellar Standard Opens** – 1st December 2025
2. **Evidence Submission Closes** – 20th February 2026
3. **Meet the Experts (Dragons' Den)** - w/c 23rd March 2026

Stellar Standard Recipients Announced – *National Day for Staff Networks, 13 May 2026 (London)*

What is the Cost?

The process costs just **£249 per network submission**. This fee is to cover administrative costs and is not a for profit activity.

The Stellar Standard signifies excellence and best practice in network development and leadership. **No matter where you conclude the process, your network will receive feedback to support its continued growth and strengthen your network.**

Past Recipients

In its inaugural year 2023, we received a number of applications but only **two** networks were awarded the Stellar Standard:

- **The Disability & Wellness Network** (GSTT, Royal Brompton & Harefield)
 - **The Women's Network** (Associate British Foods)
-

Find Out More

 **Email:** Info@stellarstandard.co.uk

 **Website:** www.stellarstandard.co.uk

 **Opening Date:** 1st December 2025 / **Recognition Date:** 13 May 2026

 **Instagram:** [@StellarStandard](https://www.instagram.com/StellarStandard)



Annex A – Frequently Asked Questions

Given the current climate about staff networks/ employee resource groups (ERGs), is this the right time to be doing this?

Amid growing interest in the role of staff networks, the **Stellar Standard** provides a timely and valuable opportunity to celebrate and strengthen their impact. While public narratives sometimes overlook the powerful contributions networks make, this benchmark shines a light on their achievements and potential. Through a supportive and developmental process, the Stellar Standard helps networks enhance their effectiveness, demonstrate their value, and play an even greater role in fostering an inclusive and thriving organisational culture.

How long will I have to submit my evidence?

Stage 1 and Stage 2 close on 31st January 2026. However, if you get through stage 2 assessment, you can submit evidence at any time until Friday 20th February 2026.

What evidence will you need at stage 2 and in what format?

- You can upload evidence in pdf format but this should be limited 250 words per criterion i.e. 3000 words in total
- You can include links to URLs – please ensure that they are accessible to those outside your organisation
- For accessibility purposes, you can submit a video instead explaining your evidence but each section should be 1 minute in length (12 mins max). You should also provide a transcript of the video.

Where will the Dragon’s Den meetings be held?

In person events will take place in a central location in London. We will also have some online options.

How can recipients publicise?

In addition to the certificate of acknowledgement, recipients will be able to use a special signature signoff in their emails. Virtual badges of recognition will also be provided to use on social media platforms.



Stellar Standard Schedule



Stage 1:
Stellar Standard opens
Monday 1st December 2025

DECEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3



Stage 2:
Evidence Submission
by Friday 20th February 2026

FEBRUARY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28



Stage 3:
Meet the Experts
w/c Monday 23rd March 2026

MARCH 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4



Recipients announced on: Wednesday 13th May 2026