

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: JAMES TO CLEAR - STAFF NETWORK, MEDIA HANDLING
Date: 08 November 2022 11:51:00
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

Hi both,

Grateful if you could let me know about any 'rumblings' you pick up on and whenever you know the exact day the network will be promoted.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: Bevan, James <James.Bevan@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 November 2022 11:30
To: [REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>
Cc: Chief Executive Office <Chief.Executive@environment-agency.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: JAMES TO CLEAR - STAFF NETWORK, MEDIA HANDLING

[REDACTED]: thanks. Fine. Let me know if we get any interest.

[REDACTED]: and you let me know please if there is any internal rumbling from others.

James

Sent from my iPad

On 8 Nov 2022, at 10:12, [REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk> wrote:

Hi James,

Please see media handling on the new Sex Equality and Equity Network below.
Grateful for your view when you can.

To note, we haven't been approached on this or seen any media coverage yet.

Many thanks,

██████

To: James Bevan

Already cleared by: ██████, Anna Burns, Caroline Douglass

Issue: A new civil service wide staff network called [Sex Equality and Equity Network \(SEEN\)](#) has been established. The network aims to promote and support sex equality and equity between men and women in the workplace. The network say their focus is "on challenging sex discrimination and upholding rights and protections that relate to sex".

The network holds the protected belief (covered by the protected characteristic of religion and belief in the Equality Act 2010) that biological sex is binary and immutable.

Some members of Environment Agency staff are founding members of the network and plan to publish an item on the Defra Yammer channel to publicise the network during w/c 7 November.

Media handling: The staff network has already been launched and we have not seen any media pick up. Although it is possible this could enter the public domain and attract some media interest, particularly in outlets such as the Daily Mail or trade press like Civil Service World. Overall, this would be a Cabinet Office lead as the network is civil service wide and they would handle queries reactively. If we receive any approaches on the network which are not specific about the EA we will direct to the Cabinet Office in the first instance.

It is unlikely the EA would feature in media coverage as potential coverage would like discuss the network as a whole and potentially link it to ministerial and government positions on related issues. However, if any coverage does pick up on EA involvement we have prepared the below reactive lines. These lines make clear that the EA is committed to creating an inclusive workplace. The lines also explain factually that the staff network has been recognised by the Cabinet Office and is civil service wide, rather than just in the EA.

Separately, Defra group and EA internal comms are aware and are working on internal comms handling.

Are you content with this media handling approach?

Background information:

- The wellbeing of all staff is a top priority for the Environment Agency.
- The EA is a public service, place based organisation so it is crucial we are an inclusive organisation and representative of the communities we serve.
- We are working to promote inclusion for all staff and to tackle discrimination through a range of actions – including mandatory Respect at Work training for all employees, refreshed grievance, dispute and resolution policies, and ongoing collaboration with our diversity networks.
- The cross-government Sex Equality and Equity Network (SEEN) is recognised by the Cabinet Office and is open to staff across government, including staff at the Environment Agency.

If needed:

- As part of our commitment to being an inclusive employer, we will seek to ensure all staff feel supported and respected in the workplace. Our staff have the right to free speech and expression of belief and where there is disagreement we will support staff to talk to each and be respectful of each other, of difference and of differing views.

[Redacted] | [Redacted]
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Read our media [blog](#) here.

