NIHR Newcastle Clinical Research Facility
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, 2022 – 2027

May 2023
Executive Summary

This is our NIHR Newcastle Clinical Research Facility (NCRF) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy. It states our commitment to inclusion, to becoming demonstrably more diverse and to ensuring equality. In this document we show how we will support the EDI strategies of Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Newcastle University and the NIHR. We reflect on our present NCRF EDI maturity based on available evidence and recognise we need to journey to greater EDI maturity. We set out an action plan that over 5 years, and into the future, will allow us to make that journey and to deliver effective change.

This strategy establishes our overarching EDI goals in 4 key areas. These are:

1. The data we collect and report about the characteristics of our research community.
2. Our EDI awareness, understanding and training.
3. Our systems and processes.
4. Our partnerships.

Our EDI goals translate into a clear action plan that we will deliver over 3 phases:

1. Understand.
2. Change.
3. Embed.

We set out here how we will measure and report our progress against our action plan. We are explicit in our aim to work collaboratively with local, regional and national partners because we believe that we are likely to be more effective and more efficient together.
Contents

1. List of Abbreviations and Definitions

2. Statement of vision and commitment
   1.1. Statement
   1.2. Scope
   1.3. Existing Organisational Structure
   1.4. Acknowledgement of the NIHR strategy
   1.5. Collaborative Partners and Stakeholders
   1.6. Governance and lines of reporting

2. Self-assessment of our EDI maturity

3. Overarching Goals
   3.1. Our goals
      3.1.1. Data goals
      3.1.2. Awareness, understanding and training goals
      3.1.3. System and process goals
      3.1.4. Partnership goals

4. SMART action plan
   4.1. Monitoring
   4.2. Action plan

5. References

6. Appendix
List of Abbreviations

ARC  NIHR Applied Research Collaboration
BRC  NIHR Biomedical Research Centres
CMS  Content Management System
CRN NENC  NIHR Clinical Research Network North East and North Cumbria
CNTW  Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
EDI  Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
NCRF  NIHR Newcastle Clinical Research Facility
NIHR  National Institute for Health and Care Research
NuTH  Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
NU  Newcastle University
PPIEP  Patient and Public Involvement, Engagement and Participation
PRES  Participant Research Experience Survey

Definitions

Equality  Ensuring that everyone is given equal access to resources and opportunities to utilise their skills and talents. Taking a systems approach to what we do and how we do it and identifying and removing long standing, structural barriers to success.

Diversity  Being reflective of the wider community. Having a diverse community, with people from a broad range of backgrounds represented in all areas and at all levels.

Inclusion  An approach where groups or individuals with different backgrounds are welcomed, culturally and socially accepted, and treated equally. Engaging with each person as an individual. A sense of belonging that is respectful of people for who they are.
Statement of vision and commitment

Statement
The NIHR Newcastle Clinical Research Facility (NCRF) fully commits to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) visions of our three overarching organisations:

NIHR
We are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion in everything we do.

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
We are inclusive: Everyone is welcome here. We value and celebrate diversity, challenge discrimination and support equality. We actively listen to different voices.

Newcastle University
Newcastle University is committed to developing a fully inclusive global University community in which colleagues and students from all sectors of society can thrive equally.

Commitment
We will give our full support to the NIHR objectives that aim to;

- Develop a robust evidence base to better understand those impediments in our systems and biases in our processes that have resulted in the under-representation in our research of some communities
- Improve the diversity of research participants in the studies we support and the voices of those who shape our research agenda
- Embed diversity and inclusion in all our business processes
- Address behavioural and culture change in research and the research environment

Scope
Our “research community”, described in our EDI strategy, includes everyone who either works at NCRF or who is involved in our research activities, as described by the NIHR people framework. Our research community therefore includes staff and public research participants.

Our EDI and PPIEP strategies overlap and talk to each other. We will ensure that the diversity of the people who participate in our wide range of PPIEP activities is representative of our regional population and includes proactive in-reach to underserved communities.

Our EDI strategy is a dynamic entity and is subject to improvement over the course of this period as we reflect on what we learn ourselves and from our collaborative partnership working. In this way we hope to be ever more ambitious as we progress through our EDI maturity journey.
Existing Organisational Structure

We, the NIHR NCRF, were established by the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NuTH) and the Newcastle University (NU) Partnership in 2005 and we are proud to have been designated as an NIHR CRF since 2007. This NIHR NCRF EDI strategy, therefore, sits alongside and aligns closely with the existing EDI strategies of both NuTH and of NU and of course within the context and responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010. As public sector bodies both organisations are required to take steps under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act to;

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act, 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Each organisation therefore sets and reports on their Equality Objectives and publish annual gender pay gap reports. NuTH also is committed to the NHS Equality Delivery System (EDS 2022)

The latest Newcastle University Annual EDI Report, institutional EDI strategy and Equality Objectives can be viewed here showing progress against Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives, information on workforce diversity, the gender pay gap report and lots of examples and data showing great progress.

The latest NuTH Equality Objectives and EDS 2022 information can be found here showing our Trust-wide aims and objectives, EDS gradings, workforce and patient EDI data, gender pay gap reporting, Workforce Race Equality Standards, Workforce Disability Equality Standards, and describing our staff networks.

We are proud to work in our facility, that is jointly hosted by two organisations that are so obviously committed to, and actively engaged in, making EDI part of their core values, goals and practices.

Acknowledgement of the NIHR strategy

As part of the wider NIHR research family we enjoy close relationships with both NIHR directly and by working collaboratively with our partner organisations and other stakeholders. We place our NCRF EDI strategy directly in line with the NIHR EDI Strategy 2022-2027. We acknowledge, accept, share and commit to the operating principle, overall objectives, approach and the 5 themes of that strategy. Our EDI strategy seeks to operationalise the overarching NIHR EDI strategy, ultimately to foster a more diverse and inclusive environment within our NENC regional research community and at NCRF specifically.
In fact, our EDI strategy aligns to all 5 themes of the NIHR strategy and our action plan is mapped to these 5 themes:

**Theme 1 – Become a more inclusive funder of research**
Although much of the activities of theme 1 are for NIHR themselves to undertake, we will play our local role in supporting those activities where we can. For example, we will support the following NIHR activities;

- Work to the NIHR frameworks for inclusive research design and infrastructure.
- Work to meet NIHR’s aspirational diversity targets for public contributors on NCRF committees and panels and review our practices for opportunities to increase inclusivity.
- Explore how we can encourage our researchers to disaggregate research findings by sex.
- Respond to the NIHR inclusion survey of our workforce to understand what further training, resources, guidance, and support are needed to embed EDI throughout our culture.
- Ensure that we implement the NIHR-wide EDI training plan for the NIHR workforce, and report on our performance.

**Theme 2 – Widen access and participation for greater diversity and inclusion**
We hope to be able to demonstrate improvement, using evidence, against the aim of this theme in this reporting period (See Action Plan). Our activities aim to increase availability and understanding of local data, improve communication with our underserved groups and widen our local stakeholder involvement.

NCRF’s new Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIEP) Strategy has a strategic objective focused on increasing diversity in all our research activity, to ‘Establish greater relationships with under-served communities’. We will develop a joint programme of work with NCRF Patient and Public Advisory Board to achieve this, including collaboration with the Young Person’s Advisory Group North England (YPAGne) and delivering engagement workshops to community group networks and secondary schools in lower socioeconomic areas.

**Theme 3 – improve and invest in the NIHR talent pipeline**
We commit to positive action to improve the diversity of our people in the talent pipeline through changes to our processes and systems. Already Newcastle University Medical School has an excellent programme to ensure widening participation plays a central role in undergraduate recruitment, working with external stakeholders and reporting on the success of this programme.

**Theme 4 – Evidence led diversity and inclusion**
An early activity in our EDI strategy is to define the availability of, understand the barriers to and subsequently improve the systematic collection of data that describe our staff and research participants. To do so we will work within our organisation,
with regional partners and support national initiatives. We will use these data to make positive and demonstrable changes to our systems and practices and share these data where appropriate to support the wider aims of our partners, such as the NIHR.

**Theme 5 – Collaborate with partners for impact and sustainability**

We are putting collaboration at the heart of this EDI strategy, building on our regional strengths, existing NIHR and NHIP infrastructure, to work more effectively together when collecting data, sharing good practice and engaging in improvement activities. As we each want to understand and improve the diversity of those same staff members, and of the comparator population of the North-East that we represent, it makes sense to collect and analyse these data together.

As part of the NCRF’s new PPIEP Strategy’s strategic objective to ‘Establish greater relationships with under-served communities’ we will also support we will build on existing diversity and inclusion projects we have created with regional NIHR partners. This includes innovative projects such as COVID and ME, NIHR INCLUDE and Multiverse Lab projects. We will test and adopt innovative and inclusive approaches to broaden the diversity of our public contributors. We will also work with regional partners to deliver and evaluate third sector commissioning approach to PPIEP in health research, which seeks to diversify the range of public contributors from our local communities.

**Collaborative Partners and Stakeholders**

Through the NIHR UKCRF network we will work collaboratively in relation to EDI with the other UKCRFs to share information, celebrate examples of improvement and innovation and learn from each other. Such collaboration will be through the established UKCRF network theme groups and through regular UKCRF meetings.

The NIHR CRN NENC is one of our key local partners, whose own EDI initiatives and workstreams “will align and complement the NIHR Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027 and the aim ‘to truly embed EDI in everything we do ... through everyday actions, the decisions we make and the plans we put in place’.” We will work closely with CRN NENC on our aligned objectives and goals.

To do this we will form a local core research EDI group with representation from our key stakeholders including our Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW), NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) and local groups representing underserved people in our region.

**Governance and lines of reporting**

Within the NCRF, the Co-director provides the overall leadership of the EDI strategy and works with NCRF EDI group to deliver the EDI objectives. The EDI group consists of our NCRF Director, Senior Nursing Sister, Business Manager, Education and Workforce development leads and our Assistant Quality Assurance Manager. The responsibility for all of our EDI activity is shared by this group. We work closely with the NCRF PPIEP group, and the NUTH clinical research directorate and education
and training groups. Our processes and systems goal will be led by the NCRF assistant Quality Assurance (QA) manager.

The NCRF EDI group reports to the NCRF Trials and Operations group and the NCRF Senior Executive Board which meets quarterly. EDI is a standing item on the agenda of the regular meetings of these groups.

Overall, we report to the NuTH Directorate of Clinical Research Management Group and NU Translational and Clinical Research Institute (NUTCRI) Executive Boards who report, respectively, to NuTH and NU Faculty Executive Board. EDI reporting included in this structure.

As a NIHR CRF, we also report to the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility via an annual report.
Self-assessment of our EDI maturity

We wish to set EDI goals in this strategy that are appropriate and achievable. Therefore, we developed our EDI strategy and set our overarching EDI goals and action plan using an evidence based, self-assessment of our EDI maturity according to the Meyer Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Spectrum Tool. This tool helps organisations assess where they are on their EDI journey, from 'Not Yet Started, through 'Ready to start', and 'Launched', via 'Well on the way', to 'Exemplary/Leading'. The tool considers 12 different dimensions of EDI work; EDI vision, Commitment, Leadership, Policies, Infrastructure, Training, Diversity, Data, Community, Decisions, Accountability and Inclusion.

We have assessed ourselves as between 'Ready to Start' and 'Launched'

The types of evidence that we have considered include;

- A reflection on the quantity and breadth of data that we currently collect about our staff and our research participants and public contributors, and if and how we use those data for positive change.
- Consideration of examples of EDI that are already embedded into our practice and processes
- Looking at the extent of our present engagement with partners and collaborators on EDI activity
- Asking for the views of our partners and stakeholders
- Reviewing the training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) that relates to EDI
- Looking for evidence of EDI being at the fore of our organisational culture and values.

See Appendix 1 for specific examples and evidence that we considered

While there are examples of our NCRF practice where EDI maturity has 'started' we feel that such examples are not embedded widely enough into practice to justify a higher self-assessment rating of 'Launched' across all 12 dimensions. It is of course our ambition to evidence our progress on our EDI journey across the reporting period and into the future.
Overarching goals

Data Goals
Our goal is to appropriately collect data about our staff and research participants regarding the 9 protected characteristics defined in the equality act, 2010. We then hope to compare these data to similar data about other staff, research participant and public groups to help understand whether we are appropriately inclusive and representative of the wider community. This will help inform our actions and plans moving forwards toward greater EDI maturity.

Awareness, understanding and training goals
Using the data that we gather we want to show how diverse and inclusive we are. To improve all of our EDI awareness we will establish an EDI training programme and roll this out among our staff and public contributors. We will work with similar research groups in the regional and beyond to achieve this, sharing learning and good practice. We will encourage and support our staff to take up EDI leadership and champion roles. Where we undertake PPIEP activities we will ensure EDI principles and practices are followed.

Systems and processes goals
Our goal is to embed EDI into our formal and informal processes. To do this we will review each of our systems and processes for evidence that our EDI strategy is included, using national guidelines, such as NIHR INCLUDE, to help guide this work. We will work collaboratively with partners, locally and beyond, to share good examples and best practice.

Partnerships goals
Throughout this strategy we make regular reference to our commitment to work together, inclusively, within the NCRF, NuTH and NU and with our partner organisations (for example the NIHR BRC, NHIP, CNTW, CRN NENC, NIHR, UKCRF) and stakeholders. Operationally this means forming EDI specific working groups, undertaking focussed activities (such as pilot projects) and being EDI champions in other collaborative forums. We will share our data for the better understanding of diversity and inclusion across our research community and region. We will review our EDI goals and achievements to ensure that we align with our partners. As we make positive changes we expect to work increasingly with local or national organisations who represent underserved people, typically together with our PPIEP team and working groups.
Monitoring of progress against this action plan is a standing item on our Trials and Operations fortnightly meeting. Progress against the action plan will be reviewed annually in our Senior Executive Board and with our Scientific Advisory Board and Patient and Public Advisory Board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Understand (by the end of year 2)</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Change (years 2-4)</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Embed (years 4-5)</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Identify and scope the current system capacity for collecting diversity data from a). NCRF staff and b). NCRF research participants. Identify appropriate comparator data sets.</td>
<td>Report produced and presented to NCRF Trials and Operations group and the NCRF Senior Executive Board</td>
<td>Based on NCRF comparison with local groups, identify areas of underrepresentation in the workforce and test initiatives for improving the diversity of a). NCRF staff and b). NCRF research participants</td>
<td>Annual monitoring of diversity data for NCRF staff and research participants, including comparators.</td>
<td>Collaborate with local and national partners to share the lessons learned in relation to increasing diversity of staff and research participants in the NCRF.</td>
<td>Report on aggregated diversity data circulated with partners and stakeholders, including lessons learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</td>
<td>Action target date: 10/24</td>
<td>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</td>
<td>Action target date: 10/26</td>
<td>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</td>
<td>Action target date: 08/27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness, understanding and training</td>
<td>Create and agree an 'EDI curriculum' for NCRF staff and a list of available EDI educational resources and a plan for delivery</td>
<td>Report produced and presented to NCRF Trials and Operations group and the NCRF Senior</td>
<td>Routine delivery of EDI training as per the EDI curriculum and logged on the Learning Lab system for all staff</td>
<td>Annual monitoring of EDI training completed by NCRF staff</td>
<td>Collaborate with local and National partners to share EDI educational resources, curricula and best practice</td>
<td>Partnership reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems and Processes</td>
<td>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</td>
<td>Action target date: 10/24</td>
<td>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</td>
<td>Action target date: 10/26</td>
<td>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</td>
<td>Action target date: 08/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Action**: Review NCRF Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Meeting Terms of Reference (ToRs) for evidence of consideration of EDI principles and best practice. List which SOP and ToR do not consider EDI and suggest amendments to SOP and ToR.

- **Details**: Report produced and presented to NCRF Trials and Operations group and the NCRF Senior Executive Board. Amend all SOP and regular meeting ToR to include consideration of EDI principles and best practice.

- **Report**: Audit of SOP and Meeting ToR updated. Collaborate with local and National partners to share best practice in relation to EDI being embedded in research teams systems and processes. Engage with pilot studies in collaboration with partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnerships</th>
<th>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</th>
<th>Action target date: 10/24</th>
<th>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</th>
<th>Action target date: 10/26</th>
<th>Action owner: NCRF EDI team</th>
<th>Action target date: 08/27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Action**: Establish a regional research EDI working group to work collaboratively on shared EDI goals.

- **Details**: Report EDI working group ToR, membership and share minutes of meeting. EDI working group is engaged in active EDI data collection and monitoring, supports pilot projects around best practice, considers shared EDI training curriculum. Report of EDI working group achievements and ongoing projects. EDI working group output is informing practice in NCRF and beyond.

- **Partnership Reports**: 5 year summary report of EDI working group achievements and ongoing / planned EDI projects.
References

NIHR EDI strategy  *NIHR Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027*

NU EDI strategy  [NU-EDI-Report-2021.pdf (ncl.ac.uk)](ncl.ac.uk)

INCLUDE  [Improving inclusion of under-served groups in clinical research: Guidance from INCLUDE project | NIHR](ncl.ac.uk)


NuTH EDI site  [Equality Delivery System and Public Sector - Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk)](newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk)
Appendix

Appendix 1 - evidence used to inform EDI maturity self-assessment

We believe that at the organisations level both NuTH and NU are relatively advanced in their EDI maturity. Both organisations include EDI in their core values and strategies. At NuTH for example, ‘We are inclusive’ is one of 5 values that ‘guide everything we do to achieve our vision’ as part of our 5 year strategy. This value has been translated into clear and specific patient and people objectives and has helped set up staff networks and many inclusive communications and activities. Furthermore, change is happening, for example in 2022-2023 the mean gender pay gap at NuTH has reduced by 2.5%, matching a trend of reduction at NU also. Aggregate data published by NuTH describing the characteristics of our staff and patients as part of the Equality Delivery System is rich and is compared to the previous population census data. Similarly recruitment, appraisal, flexible working and harassment data are all disaggregated by each of the protected characteristics and publicly reported. These achievements have been recognised with NuTH being named a top 100 Stonewall employer and NU being awarded a Silver Athena Swan award.

However, while the Organisation-wide maturity is relatively advanced, at the NCRF level we feel we are less mature, not least because although our team participate in the values, strategies and objectives of the Trust EDI vision, we are unable to disaggregate these data and measures of success by location. We have though begun the process. For example, we have gained permission to collect aggregate data describing the characteristics of our NuTH research workforce and expect to further disaggregate these data by research group, including NCRF. We have collected fewer data describing our trial participants and public contributors but have begun the process of expanding these data sets and exploring barriers. Our PRES data for example are richer than our routinely collected data. We have begun collaborative working with our NENC CRN colleagues to collect and explore these data sets while accessing regional census data for comparison.

What is clear is that our EDI journey has begun and that the mechanisms and people exist in our organisations to achieve our action plan goals. For example we have engaged in a range of activities and collaborative workstreams to reach out to underserved communities such as COVID and ME and Multiverse Lab projects. Within the NCRF we have a staff member who serves as a Cultural Ambassador within Newcastle hospitals. The primary aim of the Cultural Ambassador Programme is to help ensure equity of treatment for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) members of staff during the formal process of an investigation, grievance or disciplinary, or where a BAME member of staff has raised a complaint under the Dignity and Respect Policy. We now ensure the diversity of our recruitment selection panels, we delivery training on EDI to all NCRF staff members and EDI is a standing
agenda item on some of our regular meetings, although not usually part of the terms of reference for those meetings.
Contact us

Newcastle Clinical Research Facility
Level 6, Leazes Wing
Royal Victoria Infirmary
Queen Victoria Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4LP
United Kingdom

Clinical Ageing Research Unit
Campus for Ageing and Vitality
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 5PL

Dental Clinical Research Facility
School of Dental Sciences
Newcastle University
Framlington Place
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 4BW

Email: crf.admin@newcasastle.ac.uk
Telephone: +44(0)191 282 0070