

NIHR Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre EDI Strategy Document

Statement of vision and commitment

Our vision is to transform lives through world-leading research in ageing and multiple long-term conditions (MLTC). To deliver on this vision we are committed to ensuring our research excellence is enabled by an inclusive environment that prioritises equality, equity and diversity. Our leadership will provide a visible representation of this and through a collective and individual commitment; we will drive positive change and implement best practice. We see diversity as key to current and future excellence and inclusivity as its bedrock.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy reflects the progress made in the BRC to date and what has been achieved, but also aims to be an honest recognition of the areas where more progress is needed.

Definitions

Equality

Equality means making sure everyone has equal opportunity. It is making sure people are not treated differently or discriminated against because of their protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnicity), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).

Equity

Equity is giving people the resources they need, to make things fair and ensure that everyone has the same opportunities. Equity is distinct from equality, which is giving everyone the same amount of resources.

Diversity

Diversity is recognising, and valuing differences in people and their lived experience. A diverse environment, combined with inclusive leadership, is one with a wide range of backgrounds and mindsets, and is essential to nurture an empowered culture of creativity and innovation.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a sense of belonging, where individuals feel valued and able to thrive in their environment, no matter their background, identity or circumstance.

Overarching goals

Our overarching goals are for the NIHR Newcastle BRC to have:

- Leaders who take personal ownership and responsibility for equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and lead by example.
- A diverse, representative workforce at all levels where people respect, value and celebrate their differences.
- An inclusive and supportive research culture.
- A commitment to develop the next generation of inclusive researchers.

We believe that:

- Equality and equity create a positive working environment, retain staff, promote well-being and help to nurture good ideas and problem solving.
- Diversity increases creativity and innovation, makes us better problem solvers and helps develop new viewpoints that lead to better results.
- Inclusion makes the workplace culture safe and supportive.

We want to embed EDI across all facets of our BRC, making it a natural part of what we do. We believe that inclusion is fundamental to achieving our vision. If people feel valued, respected, accepted and encouraged to fully participate in an organisation they are much more likely to describe barriers and say what resources they need to achieve equity. Without inclusion those voices are lost, making the goal of an equitable environment that is also equal and diverse extremely difficult to achieve and maintain.

We will seek to avoid tokenism, interventions that are focused around “fixing the people” and short-term initiatives. Instead, we will make long-term, sustainable, systemic changes with a leadership team that acknowledges that EDI is a critical component of the organisation. Working with our leadership team, we will translate our EDI strategy into meaningful actions and personal commitments. EDI is also central to our Patient and Public Involvement, Engagement (PPIE) and Research Capacity Development strategies, for example in our ambitions to increase the diversity of our public contributors and training cohorts. We will grow and develop the synergy and collaboration across these and other BRC delivery areas.

NIHR

NIHR is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion in everything it does and its 2022-2027 Research Inclusion strategy seeks to ensure it collaboratively implements inclusive practice in its research, culture and systems. As part of its strategy NIHR identified five themes which are shown below:



These themes have helped to inform our NIHR Newcastle BRC EDI strategy and plans.

Leadership and governance

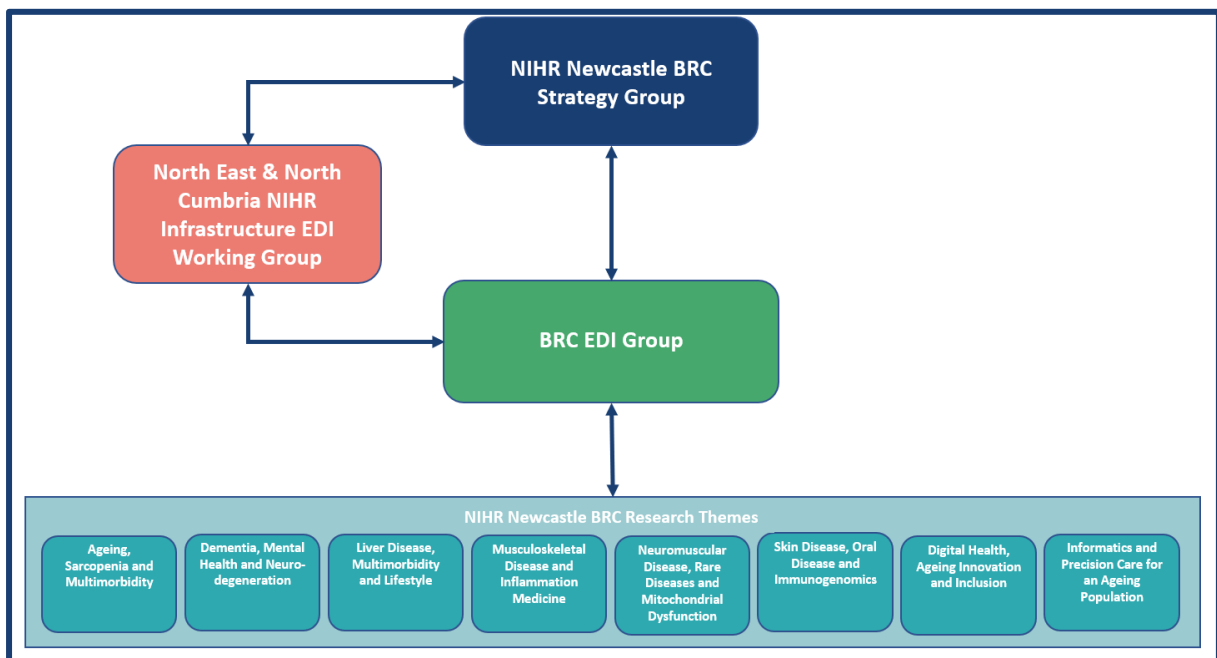
Our NIHR Newcastle BRC EDI activity is led by BRC EDI Academic Lead, Professor Muzlifah Haniffa, Co-lead for the BRC Skin Disease, Oral Disease and Immunogenomics research theme. Muzlifah has long been a role model for minority and women scientists, championing a collaborative and supportive research culture based on team science. Working closely with Muzlifah is Dr Karen Suetterlin, an NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer and Emerging Leader for the BRC Ageing, Sarcopenia and Multimorbidity research theme.

A BRC EDI Group comprising Muzlifah, Karen, the BRC Director, Chief Operating Officer and newly appointed Training, Education and EDI (TEEDI) Manager, will meet quarterly, reporting to the BRC Strategy Group, which oversees the strategic direction and operational management of the BRC. An annual BRC Strategy Group meeting focused on EDI will ensure review and discussion of the delivery of the strategic objectives at the most senior level to inform management and governance processes.

We are committed to harnessing representation from across the BRC community and we want to empower diverse communities, build inclusivity and ensure that the voices of those with lived experience are heard. To do this we will create spaces where people feel safe and thus able to identify the barriers that exist and inform how the BRC can best achieve its EDI objectives. We plan to explore the most

appropriate and effective ways to do this; options include establishing an BRC EDI Advisory Group, open to staff and students, that would feed in to the BRC EDI Group.

In addition, each of our BRC themes have identified an EDI lead who will drive activity within research themes and form a collaborative network to coordinate activity and share good practice across the BRC and wider partnership. The schema below shows the formal structure for the BRC's EDI activity.



Partners and collaborators

As a NIHR BRC we are one of 20 world-leading centres of internationally competitive research in England and so have the opportunity to be advocates of best practice and to drive change to improve the culture of research. Central to this is our place in the wider partnership.

Since the first NIHR BRC award was secured in 2007, the NIHR Newcastle BRC has been a partnership between Newcastle Hospitals and Newcastle University. In the most recent BRC award the partnership was expanded to include Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW). Our NIHR Newcastle BRC strategy aligns closely with, and is complementary to, the existing EDI strategies of our partner organisations who recognise that diversity is key to current and future excellence and are committed to meaningful approaches to EDI.

The North East and North Cumbria is also home to a wide range of NIHR funded research infrastructure. Through the BRC led North East and North Cumbria NIHR

Infrastructure Group we will work collaboratively to help make the region a leader in effective EDI through a separate regional EDI Working Group.

Self-assessment of our EDI maturity

We have ambitious aims for EDI but have sought to develop a strategy and action plan that is appropriate and achievable at this stage.

Our partner organisations (Newcastle Hospitals, Newcastle University and CNTW) are relatively advanced in their EDI maturity. The BRC will adhere to the principles and aims of our partner organisations’ policies with respect to EDI and in doing so we will aim to act as an exemplar in this area. Our strategy has been developed with institutional-level policies in mind but tailored to the specific circumstances of the BRC itself.

We have made significant strides and have a leadership team that is both a visible representation of diversity and has collective and individual commitment to drive change and implement best practice. However, as an independent entity, the BRC is less mature.

As a next step we have created and newly appointed a new Training, Education and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (TEEDI) Manager post. This will have responsibility for supporting the development of structures and programmes for delivery of an ambitious programme of BRC-wide EDI activity enabling an actively inclusive research culture. We have an allocated budget for EDI Delivery, Innovation and Events and aim to embed EDI across all our BRC activities.

Using the Meyer Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Spectrum Tool, we undertook a self-assessment of the BRC’s EDI Maturity based on the Tool’s twelve dimensions of DEI work. We critically reflected upon the BRC’s current EDI status across the twelve dimensions:

DEI Vision	Commitment	Leadership
Policies	Infrastructure	Training
Diversity	Data	Community
Decisions	Accountability	Inclusion

We currently place the BRC between the stages of ‘Ready to Start’ and ‘Launched’. We believe the BRC’s DEI Vision is strong and would place ourselves as ‘Well on the Way’ but feel our EDI Maturity is less developed in the other eleven dimensions.

In assessing the BRC’s EDI Maturity, we reflected upon:

- The leadership and governance structure of EDI activity and resource available to enact the action plan.
- Historical data available for analysis to inform future activity and the potential challenges of accessing data.
- Existing EDI training opportunities and opportunities for future development.

We aim to use the Meyer DEI Spectrum Tool on an annual basis (as a minimum) to reflect upon our EDI journey and to support the evaluation of progress across the reporting period and duration of the funding.

EDI Action Plan

Our BRC EDI Strategy provides the basis for the development of our EDI action plan, which outlines our commitments for the delivery of the strategy. This plan will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually to measure progress against our objectives, with reports provided to our BRC Strategy Group.

To collect monitoring data over multiple years, and to deliver long lasting change and impact, we plan to establish work programmes and projects, typically in conjunction with key partners. This will enable us to review how effective actions are and adapt to the changing needs in research and society.

Our initial action plan, set out in the table below, is focused on the short and medium term (1-3 years) with reference to our longer-term plans (3 years+) in order to put in place the key steps needed to support our ambitious overall EDI plans. This includes collecting baseline data, building links to key partnership EDI groups and establishing working groups. The plan will be reviewed annually and further developed through the award period, paying attention to the current socio-economic and political climate.

NIHR EDI Theme	BRC Goal	Key Activities	Measure of Success	Monitored by
<p>NIHR EDI Theme</p> <p>1. Become a more inclusive funder of research</p> <p>3. Improve and invest in the NIHR talent pipeline</p> <p>5. Collaborate with partners for impact and sustainability</p>	<p>Leaders who take personal ownership and responsibility for equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and lead by example.</p>	<p>Short term</p> <p>Work with the University's Central EDI team to develop a bespoke Equality Analysis training for Newcastle BRC leaders.</p>	<p>Delivery of Equality Analysis training event in 2023/24.</p>	<p>BRC TEEDI Manager</p>
		<p>Medium term</p> <p>Encourage and support our BRC researchers and wider teams to be visible advocates for EDI to ensure inclusion is considered across everything we do.</p>	<p>Increase the profile and visibility of BRC EDI activity including creation of online resources hub and regular signposting/delivery of EDI events, ensure this is communicated and publicised across channels.</p>	<p>BRC TEEDI Manager</p>
		<p>Explore what a tailored leadership development for BRC leaders could offer with a focus on inclusive leadership.</p>	<p>Collate leadership development opportunities across key partners into a report in order to make recommendations including consultation</p>	<p>EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager</p>

			with the Newcastle University's Leadership Development team.	
		Long term Bring together EDI champions across the NIHR partnership to share best practice learned.	Host meeting with leaders across the NIHR partnership with a follow up report including best practice/ lessons learned.	EDI Academic Lead BRC Strategy Group
NIHR EDI Theme 2. Widen access and participation for greater diversity and inclusion 3. Improve and invest in the NIHR talent pipeline 4. Embed evidence-led diversity and inclusion approaches	A diverse, representative workforce at all levels where people respect, value and celebrate their differences.	Short term Create new role to support EDI across NIHR Newcastle BRC. Explore how EDI evidence base can be developed and understand how partnership initiatives, like Newcastle University's campaign to promote sharing of diversity data can be utilised and the Social Mobility Commission Data Toolkit. Ensure partnership EDI Networks are well publicised for all new	The appointment of Training, Education and EDI Manager. Convene meeting with partnership People Services/ EDI teams to explore what data can be accessed. Share minutes of meeting and actions Include information e.g. flyer or signpost to website detailing	Newcastle BRC COO BRC TEEDI Manager BRC TEEDI Manager

		<p>colleagues and trainees as they play a key role in supporting and guiding the BRC reach its aspiration of being a fully inclusive organisation.</p>	<p>Student and Staff EDI Networks including NU REN (Newcastle University Race Equality Network) and Disability Interest Group.</p>	
		<p>Explore the most appropriate ways to build inclusivity and ensure voices of those with lived experiences are heard.</p>	<p>Produce recommendations that the BRC can trial e.g. EDI Advisory Group open to staff and students.</p>	<p>EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager</p> <p>BRC Strategy Group</p>
		<p>Establish links with EDI groups and networks across the partnership including NHS Trusts, Faculty and University</p>	<p>Compile list of groups and networks with a view of belonging to or feeding into at least two of these groups/networks</p>	<p>BRC TEEDI Manager</p>
		<p>Medium term Review policies and processes to identify areas of improvement to increase diversity of workforce.</p>	<p>Develop and pilot at least one initiative that could support under-represented groups e.g. inclusive recruitment practices, linking in with Pro:NE, a collaboration of four North East</p>	<p>EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager</p> <p>BRC Strategy Group</p>

			universities to support BAME students and staff to widen access and participation in postgraduate research.	
		Work in partnership with Estate Teams and also link in with established EDI networks to help identify opportunities to develop spaces that cater to the needs of a diverse workforce, where they are needed and improve awareness of existing spaces.	Develop a proposal with involvement and discussions with people with lived experiences that could include suggestions of suitable space for a prayer room and quiet room to cater for workforce with different needs including, but not limited to, religion and neurodiversity.	EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager BRC Strategy Group
		Explore value and potential impact of embedding coaching and mentoring practices/ schemes and reciprocal mentoring opportunities in the BRC with a focus on supporting under-	Develop a proposal for coaching and mentoring opportunities and share with BRC Strategy Group.	EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager BRC Strategy Group

		represented groups e.g. ethnically minoritised colleagues.		
		Long term Evaluate impact of new initiatives to inform future development and learn best practice from other BRCs/ wider NIHR infrastructure.	Annual report to present findings to BRC Strategy Group and sharing best practice to partners.	EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager BRC Strategy Group
NIHR EDI Theme 1. Become a more inclusive funder of research 2. Widen access and participation for greater diversity and inclusion 3. Improve and invest in the NIHR talent pipeline 4. Embed evidence-led diversity and inclusion approaches 5. Collaborate with partners for impact and sustainability	An inclusive and supportive research culture.	Short term Ensure colleagues and trainees are aware of and have access to EDI resources including the EDI toolkit for researchers . Ensure new PhD students are welcomed into the BRC and create a sense of belonging to the NIHR Newcastle BRC. Encourage researchers to consider inclusion and inclusive practices	The creation of an online resources hub to house EDI resources and materials e.g. e-learning platform Canvas site or Teams channel and regular communications to signpost to useful resources. Ensure new PhD students receive a welcome email, induction pack and host induction event and social. Clear signposting of PPIE support and host PPIE information event	BRC TEEDI Manager BRC Communications Manager BRC TEEDI Manager BRC Communications Manager PPIE Manager

		in their research design including the diversity of research participants.		
		Medium term Explore how the creation of funding opportunities/ projects can be utilised that support an inclusive and equitable research culture.	Develop a proposal for funding opportunities/ projects that will support advancement of knowledge and/ or practice in areas relating to under-represented groups.	EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager BRC Strategy Group
		Long term Become a leader in inclusive research and share best practice with NIHR infrastructure, and beyond.	Continuous development of an online resources hub that will be made available beyond NIHR Newcastle BRC that houses resources and toolkits to support an inclusive research culture.	EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager BRC Strategy Group
NIHR EDI Theme 3. Improve and invest in the NIHR talent pipeline 4. Embed evidence-led diversity and	A commitment to develop the next generation of inclusive researchers.	Short term Seek to understand challenges and barriers of collecting historical data of PhD studentships including successful applicants and long list.	Collate report of findings including highlights of shortcomings in data and recommendations for future data collection.	BRC TEEDI Manager

<p>inclusion approaches</p> <p>5. Collaborate with partners for impact and sustainability</p>	<p>Ensure new PhD students are welcomed into the BRC and create a sense of belonging to the NIHR Newcastle BRC.</p>	<p>Ensure new PhD students receive a welcome email, induction pack and host induction event and social when new cohorts of PhD students arrive. Additionally, we will seek permission of incoming PhD students to share details with other incoming students to enable those that wish to, to form their own informal networks</p>	<p>BRC TEEDI Manager</p>
	<p>Medium term Facilitate a culture of belongingness and valued uniqueness through formal and informal (social) learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Create regular opportunities (Approx 4 BRC organised events per year as well as signposting to wider partnership events) for PhD students to come together, network with colleagues across NIHR infrastructure on topics that encourage inclusion, in particular inclusive research culture.</p>	<p>EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager</p>

		Establish best practice in terms of collection of EDI data and implement data collection as part of regular processes e.g. recruitment.	Develop a form to capture EDI data for on-going monitoring and evaluation and write a communications plan to explain what data will be collected and how it will help improve future recruitment and retention.	EDI Academic Lead/ BRC TEEDI Manager
		Long term Review state of play and success of commitment to develop the next generation of inclusive researchers.	Design and conduct survey to understand experiences of PhD students, conduct analysis of findings and make recommendations.	BRC Strategy Group