Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2022 – 2027

Background

The Centre for Health Research and Innovation (CHRI) and the NIHR Lancashire Clinical Research Facility (LCRF) are based at Royal Preston Hospital and serve the communities within Lancashire and South Cumbria (LSC).   We work on the delivery of research trials, including early phase and experimental medicine (EM) studies. We are passionate about offering all communities within LSC access and equal opportunity to be involved in innovative research trials and to ensuring our workforce represents these communities. The areas we serve are very diverse, with areas of significant social deprivation and ill-health.

'Nearly a third of LSC residents live in some of the most deprived areas across England. The percentage of people living in fuel poverty and unable to afford to heat their homes is higher than the national average: 13% for LSC, the national average is 10.6%.

The percentage of children living in poverty ranges from a low of 12% to as high as 38% in LSC, the national average is 30%.

21,442 people have five or more long term health conditions in LSC. The main causes are cancer, cardiovascular, respiratory, mental health, and neurological conditions. Suicide rates are significantly higher than average in LSC.'

(Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022 – 2027, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust - LTHTr).

Therefore, ensuring equal access to research studies that have the potential of improving the health and wellbeing of communities is vital.

The LCRF and CHRI are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion in all we do. This strategy is focused on embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion into the delivery of research within LCRF and CHRI and in our workforce. The strategy will closely follow the EDI strategy of our host NHS Trust, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (LTHTr), and the NIHR Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022 -2027 (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2022-2027/31295?pr=) to ensure collectively we are being 'consciously inclusive in everything we do for our colleagues and communities'.

Our first strategy has been designed to embed best practice and ensure everything we do is aligned to our vision 'To be the sustainable hub for the delivery of EM trials to the highest standards in LSC, addressing key clinical problems in priority areas'.

Vision

Our Vision is to develop a research department that has EDI at the centre of everything we do; where everybody can access research studies; gives every single member of the team a voice, and empowers them to be whoever they are.

This strategy is based on overarching goals: 1) Analysis 2) Training and Development 3) Implementation. The action plan (appendix 1) will be reviewed after 3 years against the SMART objectives identified.

Analysis

To provide a baseline of our current EDI position, we aim to evaluate and reflect on our EDI maturity using an established maturity model. To do this, we have established an EDI forum (first meeting February 2023) to bring together the knowledge and experiences of staff from the LCRF and CHRI partners.   We will work with the Trust and partners EDI Leads to provide leadership, expertise, and direction so we have an accurate understanding of our current position.

Alongside the development of access to anonymised patient demographics in the Trusted Research Environment (TRE), we will work with the Trust and partner EDI Leads to collate workforce baseline data to understand the differences and disparities within the team.

We will conduct an audit to provide us with data on the communities we are involving in research. This will include current and previous patient data. This will provide us with a baseline to understand if there are disparities with the patients accessing research studies.

Training and Development

We will appoint a Coordinator with CHRI to oversee day to day aspects of EDI alongside Patient and Public involvement, Engagement and Participation (PPIEP). Working with this person we will develop our understanding and knowledge on EDI issues, barriers, and implementation through having research representation on LTHTr Ambassador Groups.

On an annual basis we will invite colleagues to research huddles to educate us on the lived experience of a wide variety of characteristics. This will educate the team on appropriate terminology to ensure no colleague or patient is unintentionally excluded due to inaccuracies in the way documents are written, and staff communicate. These colleagues will also be invited to the EDI forum so their points of view and experience will inform future work.

We will work with the NIHR Manchester BRC EDI leads and attend EDI training offered.

We will ensure all members of the research team have undertaken LTHTr EDI eLearning resources available on the Trust internet.

We will be actively involved in work being undertaken by the LTHTr research intern and ensure the learning is implemented within the department. We will encourage all staff members within the LCRF and CHRI to complete the Northwest Research Workforce Survey. This survey has been designed to gather data on career progression and access to non-mandatory training and Continued Professional Development to understand any barriers staff face with accessing training and career progression.

Implementation

We will ensure all strategies and policies written by the LCRF and CHRI have an EDI section to support an increased momentum and collective focus for improvement.

We will aim for strategies, policies, and procedures to be reviewed by minority groups through LTHTr colleague Ambassador Forums and Patient Involvement Groups. Additionally, we aim to implement the use of Equality Impact Assessments at the initiation of new projects and policies to ensure that barriers and under-representation are identified and can be mitigated.

We will include EDI in the cycle of business for the LCRF Operational Group meetings to ensure local actions are being taken to progress the EDI agenda.

We aim to review policies and standard operating procedures to ensure they are consciously inclusive: for example to ensure they are gender, culture, disability and LGBTQ+ inclusive.

We will ensure all research job titles, job descriptions, and person specifications are EDI-compliant.

We will ensure all communications, publications, patient facing leaflets, and internal colleague information is gender-inclusive by changing references to gender-specific roles to gender-neutral terminology; specifically using terms such as parent/guardian, you/their/them, people or individuals, siblings, humankind (not mankind), artificial/synthetic (not manmade).

We seek to collect the demographics of patients for all 9 protected characteristics. They will be subject to audit to ensure that any risk of discrimination is monitored.

Following our initial patient audit, we will continue to routinely monitor minority characteristics of our patients every year.

We will ensure the LCRF and CHRI have a completed Supporting Disability in the Workplace Agreement with every colleague who has a disability or long-term condition and requests one. We will ensure these are regularly reviewed and updated.

We ensure all assistive technology/reasonable adjustments meet the needs and standards of our disabled staff working in the research department making sure they are correctly resourced, funded and arrive promptly.

We will seek to recruit public members involved in the research process from a diverse background that is representative of the communities within LSC.

We will take steps to increase the representation of minority colleagues within the research team to ensure the team is broadly representative of the communities we serve. This includes reviewing our recruitment processes, ensuring diverse interview panels for all interviews, and including EDI questions within the interviews.

Through undertaking an audit, we will seek to understand disparities in performance management in colleagues with protected characteristics working within the research department. Specifically this will be in relation to formal performance management processes, appraisal ratings, talent management ratings, and ability to access training and development opportunities beyond mandatory training.

We will report completion of the EDI eLearning resources to relevant groups and committees and ensure we reach a completion rate of 100%. We will include this training within the new staff induction to the department.

Using the results of the Northwest Workforce Survey we will ensure managers are giving all staff equal access to training and addressing barriers to accessing training and career progression within 1:1 meetings.

How we will measure and oversee progress

Implementation of this strategy will be shared to managers within the LCRF and CHRI and the EDI Forum.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum will:

- Be responsible for recommending approaches to EDI implementation
- Review progress against the objectives within this strategy (Appendix 1)
- Engage with Ambassador Groups within the Trust and disseminate shared learning
- Share and celebrate examples of improvements and changes made as a result of implementations of the overarching goals

Appendix 1: LCRF EDI SMART Objectives (to be formally reviewed and evaluated against SMART objectives after 3 years)

Overarching Goal 1 - Analysis

Goal	Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-bound	Task Owner
Overall objective	How specifically will we address this goal	How will success be measured	Is this objective achievable with current resources?	Is the objective relevant to the overarching goal	Within what timeline must the outcomes be achieved and measured.	Who is the principal lead for achievement of this objective.
Establish a diverse EDI forum involving EDI leads and experts from the Trust and partners to reflect Trust and NIHR policy/strategy. EDI to report to the R&I Committee	Identify named EDI leads across the Trust and partners. Organise and host an EDI specific forum in person and/or remotely once every 4 months.	Documented minutes of EDI forum meetings as evidence of outcomes. Forum review and comment on LCRF policies to reflect Trust/NIHR strategy.	Yes	Yes	April 2023	LCRF Manager
Evaluate initial EDI maturity within the LCRF and CHRI to establish a baseline	Forum members to evaluate EDI maturity level model and agree upon most appropriate description.	Documented minutes produced by EDI Forum chair documenting forum consensus on baseline EDI maturity	Yes	Yes	March 2024	EDI Forum
Identify steps to develop EDI maturity	EDI Forum to review EDI maturity model, agree a realistic target maturity level for the duration of the current period.	Documented report or minutes from the EDI Forum chair presenting SMART Objectives for achieving the target maturity level.	Yes	Yes	March 2024	EDI Forum
Continue to monitor EDI maturity and adapt/direct EDI activities to develop EDI maturity	EDI Forum to routinely assess the progress of SMART objectives produced to progress the EDI maturity level	Documented minutes from EDI Forum Chair addressing planned SMART objectives and progress made	Yes	Yes	March 2025	EDI Forum

		Yearly progress addressed as part of NIHR report.				
Conduct audits/analysis of LCRF and wider CHRI patient/participant base to monitor fair representation of our community (LSC)	Ongoing prospective collection of EDI data for patients screened for research using the diversity question set provided by NIHR	EDI forum to produce annual report summarising patient data in comparison to the local community	Yes	Yes	Yearly	EDI Forum

Overarching Goal 2 – Training & Development

Goal	Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-bound	Task Owner
Overall objective	How specifically will we address this goal	How will success be measured	Is this objective achievable with current resources?	Is the objective relevant to the overarching goal	Within what timeline must the outcomes be achieved and measured.	Who is the principal lead for achievement of this objective.
Identify colleagues to attend Ambassador Groups	EDI Forum will seek volunteers from all staff	Advertisement for colleagues to join Ambassador Forums	Yes	Yes	March 2024	EDI Forum
Ensure time is allocated to staff to ensure attendance on the Ambassador Groups	LCRF Lead to inform line managers of requirement for protected time for Ambassador groups	Attendance at Ambassador Groups recorded	Yes	Yes	March 2024	LCRF Manager
Disseminate knowledge learnt from attending Ambassador Groups	Specific time (tbd) to be allocated at EDI Forum and CRF huddles for staff to present their knowledge. Newsletter to be produced for those unable to attend.	EDI forum minutes describing these presentations. Ambassadors to be asked to summarise learning in email newsletter	Yes	Yes	Six monthly	EDI Forum
Attend EDI training provided by NIHR/MBRC to build the skill sets of the forum	Identify EDI specific training courses available for forum members	Record of attendance at at least one EDI relevant training course per EDI forum member	Yes	Yes	As required	EDI Forum chair, EDI forum members

All research staff to complete LTHTr EDI eLearning to bring teams in line with strategic thinking	Staff to complete trust eLearning module "Equality, Diversity & Human Rights" as part of mandatory training	Annual record of % of staff who have completed this eLearning course.	Yes	Yes – included in local training package	March 2024	Senior Research Team
Invite colleagues to research huddles	Open invitation for staff to attend research huddles to educate on a wide variety of characteristics. Colleagues also to be invited to the EDI Forum to inform future work	Minutes/recording of huddle presentations. Minutes of EDI forum meetings with staff involved.	Yes	Yes	March 2024	LCRF Manager
Implement findings and recommendations via specifically recruited LTHTr EDI research internship	Intern to be appointed to research and deliver this	Project published to EDI forum	Possibly	Yes	March 2027	LCRF Manager/R&I Leads

Overarching Goal 3 - Implementation

Goal	Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-bound	Task Owner
Overall objective	How specifically will we address this goal	How will success be measured	Is this objective achievable with current resources?	Is the objective relevant to the overarching goal	Within what timeline must the outcomes be achieved and measured.	Who is the principal lead for achievement of this objective.
Access to training and development is equal – conduct a review of the training undertaken by colleagues	Line managers to assess the training opportunities available and undertaken per employee, including as part of annual employee appraisals	LCRF lead and managers to oversee dissemination of the Northwest Research Workforce Survey	Yes	Yes	Ongoing	LCRF/R&I Managers

New job roles and job descriptions use appropriate terminology Encourage more diverse backgrounds in interview panels	All published roles & descriptions to contain only EDI compliant language	EDI forum to review, comment on and/or produce formal guidance/SOP for managers when producing job descriptions.	Yes	Yes	March 2024	R&I Managers
All disabled colleagues have a Supporting Disability in the Workplace Agreement	Completion of "Supporting Disability" Agreement for all relevant LCRF employees as per LTHTr SOP "Supporting Disability in the Workplace"	LCRF Manager to monitor completion and management of agreements via Line Managers	Yes	Yes	March 2024	LCRF Manager
Resource and fund all assistive equipment for disabled colleagues	Provision of appropriate support as specifically identified in supporting disability agreements	At least annual review of supporting disability agreements overseen by LCRF lead	Yes	Yes	March 2024	LCRF/R&I Managers
Report metrics of EDI eLearning to LCRF Ops, Partners Groups and LTHTr Senior Team Meetings	eLearning team to be asked for available metrics relating to departmental employees	Meeting minutes to reflect the metrics and discussion of improvement strategies if required.	Yes	Yes	March 2024 (Annual Review)	LCRF/R&I Managers
EDI section on agenda for Ops and Partner meetings	LCRF Lead will liaise with chair of Ops & Partners meeting to introduce a specific recurring agenda item	Ops & Partners meeting minutes to reflect this agenda item	Yes	Yes	September 2024	LCRF Manager
New SOPs, policies and procedures have been reviewed by minority groups via the ambassador groups	All submitted policy documents are to be sent to the Ambassador group chair with a request for an agenda item to review them and feed back to the authors	SOP policy document to be amended to include instructions: All policy documents to include a description confirming that they have been reviewed by relevant groups.	Yes	Yes	September 2025	LCRF Quality Lead

Policies and procedures have an EDI section included	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) documentation to be utilised in the planning stages of new policy/procedures/ activities	All policy documents to include EDI section prior to ratification. At minimum this is to include EIA assessment and record of review at EDI forum.	Yes	Yes	March 2027	Quality Lead/Senior Research Leads
Patient facing leaflets and comms have been reviewed by the EDI forum and Ambassador Groups	R&I Leads to forward all planned communications materials to EDI forum chair and Ambassador chair for review prior to publication.	Record of submission to relevant forums and relevant amendments to be recorded by author of comms. If practical, the final material to include a description of the group(s) who have provided review.	Yes	Yes	March 2027	LCRF Manager/R&I Leads
Encourage that public members on LCRF groups and committees reflect the communities within LSC	Encourage and audit annually the membership and encourage inclusivity in recruitment campaigns e.g. in the LRG	Proportionate representation of underserved communities on groups and committees.	Yes	Yes	March 2027	R&I LRG

Authors: J.Bramley (LCRF Manager), D. Hadjiyiannakis (LCRF Director), P.Brown (Deputy Director of Research & Innovation), D.Cameron (Senior Clinical Research Fellow). 30/05/2023.