Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy – 2023-2026

Introduction

NIHR St George's Clinical Research Facility (CRF) is committed to building a workforce which is valued and whose diversity reflects the communities it serves, enabling it to deliver the best possible healthcare service to those communities.

Everyone who works in the CRF, or applies to work in the CRF, must be treated fairly and valued equally irrespective of age, disability, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, religion or belief; sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity status, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership.

These are known as protected characteristics. The NIHR CRF is committed to enabling everyone to achieve their full potential in an environment characterised by dignity and mutual respect.

Development of the Strategy

Our strategy has been developed with reference to the NIHR Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and the St Georges University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies and created in conjunction with the local Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team. Whilst also aligning with the NIHR themes which are outlined in the NIHR EDI Strategy 2022-2027 (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/about-us/NIHR-equality-diversity-inclusion-strategy.pdf).

With a focus of key priorities developed below, whereby theme 2 (Widen access and participation for greater diversity and inclusion) covers key priority 1, theme 3 (Improve and invest in the NIHR talent pipeline) and theme 4 (Evidence-led diversity and inclusion) covers key priority 4, and theme 5 (Collaborate with partners for impact and sustainability (which covers key priority 1,3 and 5).

This strategy is a working document that will continue to evolve over time in accordance with the needs of the local community and the staff the NIHR St Georges CRF caters to.

Where we are

All Trust staff, including Clinicians and Researchers are required to complete yearly mandatory Equality and Diversity training and there is currently a high rate of compliance of CRF workforce completing this training. This training is related to the 9 protected characteristics and focused on the treatment of staff and patients that fall into any of the characteristic groups. St Georges' University, a partner of the Trust is also committed to EDI training of researchers and staff that have honorary contracts with St Georges' University Hospitals Trust.

Our NIHR CRF routinely collects ethnicity, gender and age data as part of the clinical trials on the patients we recruit, however, this is not mandated for all patients on all studies.

As a new NIHR CRF, the NIHR St George's Clinical Research Facility is currently between the compliance and discovery stages of our EDI implementation process, based on the Veza Global model (https://vezaglobal.com). Our anticipated progress is to advance to the committed stage on the EDI Maturity Model over the next 3 years, to be better aligned with St Georges University Hospital Trust's own EDI journey.

Our key priorities

1. Strategy Delivery & Planning
- There should be continual development
- Processes should be maintained and improved over time
- EDI group should be setup that represents staff and local South-West London Demographics
- Improve communications to staff and study participants

2. Staff Recruitment, Career Development and Retention
- CRF Workforce to be a similar reflection of the Trust workforce and local community ensuring EDI representation especially in senior levels
- Fair and transparent processes for Staff training and development opportunities
- Consideration of Staff Leavers viewpoints and implementation of recommendations where relevant

3. Embedding Anti-Discrimination Practices for an Inclusive Culture
- Embedding standards for an inclusive culture and workforce
- Ensure staff complete mandatory Equality and Diversity training

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- Leadership, accountability, and transparency will be demonstrated at all levels

4. Improving, Promotion and Recruitment to Research within Protected Groups
- Improve the data we capture on patients who sit in protected groups
- Increase the number of patients we recruit from protected groups
- Increase the number of studies that recruit to protected groups

5. Measuring Progress
- Progress will be measured and reported on

Staff in the CRF should be involved in the process and the data we capture in line with Trust Information Governance and HR policies.

Action Plan:

St George's CRF is currently in the compliance and discovery stages, and we will start working on identifying any weaknesses and gather data from different sources, including working with the UK CRF Network to define how protected characteristics will be measured and reported in our staff and patients, such that we are working together with other CRF's to improve performance nationally. The action plan below will undergo further development in the near future when we have gathered data and identified weaknesses. Processes will be implemented, and targets will be set to resolve these issues.

It is also important to note that all data we capture on staff will be approved by the group and the individual staff member.

1. Strategy Delivery & Planning

Activity	Method	Timescale	Actioned By
Discuss and identify what key EDI characteristics should be focused on in the strategy and how this should be captured. with CRF workforce	Invite members of the CRF team and management to jointly decide and identify on key EDI protected characteristics in a series of meetings with actioned points.	Q3-Q4 of Year 1 (2022-2023)	PPIE Manager, CRF Team and CRF Management
Establish EDI consultation group consisting of relevant stakeholders	Review members and select and in addition add/remove additional members as required.	Q3-Q4 of Year 1 (2022-2023)	PPIE Manager, CRF Team, CRF Management

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Establish meetings on quarterly basis of the EDI consultation group	Set up calendar with quarterly meetings for EDI consultation group and set objectives in line with strategy and maturity method.	Q3-Q4 of Year 1 (2022-2023)	PPIE Manager, EDI consultation group, CRF Management
Launch and embed our EDI strategy and action plan to staff and stakeholders to support the delivery of the strategy	Review EDI strategy before wider dissemination to report progress and revise action plan as and when necessary	Q1 of Year 2 (2023-2024)	PPIE Manager, EDI consultation Group, CRF Management

2. Staff Recruitment, Career Development and Retention

As mentioned above all data we capture must be approved by the Trust. Therefore, some of the data capture below might not be included if it is not approved.

Activity	Method	Timescale	Actioned By
Gather data on staff retention, this will be with the assistance of Trust HR	Review in line with Trust and CRF EDI Strategy and set measures of improvement where necessary	Q1– Q2 of Year 2 (2023/24)	PPIE Manager, EDI Consultation Group, CRF Management
Gather data on staff leavers survey	Questionnaire questions adapted from NIHR diversity question in line with Trust HR policies	Q1 – Q2 of Year 2 (2023/24)	PPIE Manager, EDI Group, Trust EDI Lead, CRF Management
Gather data on interview success rates in line with locally agreed EDI metrics	Questionnaire questions adapted from NIHR diversity questions in line with Trust HR policies	Q1 of Year 3 – ongoing (2024/25)	PPIE Manager, EDI Consultation Group, Trust EDI Lead, CRF Management
Gather data on staff members career development training	Questionnaire questions adapted from NIHR diversity questions in line with Trust HR policies	Q3 of Year 2 – ongoing (2023/24)	PPIE Manager, EDI Consultation Group, Trust EDI Lead, CRF Management
Gather data on PDFR completion statistics	Questionnaire questions adapted from NIHR diversity questions in line with Trust HR policies	Q3 of Year 2 – ongoing (2023/24)	PPIE Manager, EDI Consultation Group, Trust EDI Lead, CRF Management

3. Embedding Anti-Discrimination Practices for an Inclusive Culture

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As mentioned above all data we capture, and training must be approved by the Trust. Therefore, some of the data capture and training below might not be included if it is not approved.			
Activity	**Method**	**Timescale**	**Actioned By**
Gather data on what percentage of CRF staff have completed mandatory Equality & Diversity training	Work with HR and reports to analyse this information and utilise Microsoft Power BI alongside Trust EDI Leads and ensure that by the end of each year a larger percentage of staff (90%+ have completed their training)	Q3 of Year 2 (2023/24) ongoing	PPIE Manager, CRF Management Team, Operations Manager,
Continually review staff feedback and develop practices to improve culture when and if required.	Utilising the EDI group as a means to gather feedback from the wider staff group and work on improvements where necessary	Q1 of Year 2 (2023/24) - ongoing	PPIE Manager, EDI Consultation Group, CRF Management
Develop internal research specific Equality and Diversity training package	Working together with EDI group, management and wider staff to understand any gaps and address the needs through delivering diversity training programmes.	Q1 – Q2 of Year 3 (2024/25)	PPIE Manager, EDI Consultation Group, CRF Management

4. Improving Promotion and Recruitment to Research Within Protected Groups
Involve the public in research management, regulation, leadership and decision-making.

Activity	**Method**	**Timescale**	**Actioned By**
Identify number of St Georges sponsored study applications requiring CRF support that ensure access to trials for under-represented groups.	Develop a program upon identification of sponsored studies to promote and educate researchers on research opportunities for protected groups (PPIE strategy).	Q2 of Year 2 *2024/25)	PPIE Manager, PPIE Steering Group, CRF Management
Design a dashboard that reports on protected group recruitment in line with Trust information, Governance and GDPR regulation	Once designed, implementing the dashboard, reviewing and improving dashboard by consulting key stakeholders	Q1 of Year 3 (2024/25) - ongoing	PPIE Manager, CRF Management Team
Improve number of possible participants that we gather protected characteristics on by 5%	Improve the number of possible participants by 5% through better engagement and partnerships with local community (PPIE strategy).	Q1 of Year 4 (2025/26) - ongoing	PPIE Manager, PPIE Steering Group, CRF Management Team
	Improve techniques of recruitment to make participation more accessible for underrepresented groups		

5. Measuring Progress

Activity	Method	Timescale	Actioned By
Establish baseline data and set KPIs and metrics	Once established, report and review metrics and shift KPIs as required.	Q3 of Year 2 (2024/25)	PPIE Manager, Operations Manager, CRF Management Team, EDI Consultation group

Measuring Success

Our strategy will be reviewed yearly and monitored periodically by the CRF management team and relevant key stakeholders using the action plan to guarantee fulfilment of the agreed objectives or their revision where necessary.

Feedback from research staff and participants regarding the impact of the strategy on the CRF environment and research participation in line with EDI values will also be collected and reported on to inform on future objectives in this important area.

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