

Oxford Clinical Research Facility

Equality Diversity Inclusion Strategy

Introduction

The National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) have developed a strategy to deliver their Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) objectives across their infrastructure. Their approach aims to ensure EDI is embedded in all their related systems, culture, and processes. To deliver this, NIHR Clinical Research Facilities (CRFs) must contribute to the wider objectives by developing correlating EDI strategies which are also relevant to their local contexts and situations.

The NIHR Oxford CRF comprises of a network of facilities delivering experimental research across both the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUHT) and the University of Oxford (UoO). The institutional collaboration forming the NIHR Oxford CRFs supports the development of an EDI strategy that will reflect both the clinical and research components that are the basis of a clinical research facility. The dual Institutional oversight will also lead to a sustainable approach as their individual EDI strategies will provide the core of the NIHR Oxford CRF EDI strategy.

NIHR Oxford CRF Commitment to EDI

The NIHR Oxford CRFs are committed to making research accessible to all, to ensure improved healthcare is relevant to all. We will consider equality, diversity and inclusivity in **our people, our participants and our processes**. We are committed to ensuring our strategy is an iterative process, enabling us to learn from our successes and failures, to learn from others and to learn more about the components and considerations of EDI.

Our EDI Priorities

NIHR Oxford CRF People

NIHR Oxford CRF will strive to ensure there is professional diversity within the research undertaken in the facility. This includes:

- Providing opportunities for researchers from both institutions to undertake research within the facility.
- Accommodating research led by non-medical clinicians (eg; nurses, allied health professionals (AHP)) and providing accessible opportunities for Nursing and AHP development within experimental research.

NIHR Oxford CRF will also work on seniority diversity, ensuring medical trainees and clinicians and scientists new to research are supported in their career development and their willingness to be involved in a research project. We will also provide opportunities for them to be included in governance committees which oversee the research activity in the facility.

NIHR Oxford CRF Processes

The processes utilised in the NIHR Oxford CRF are informed by different institutions (OUHT and UoO), who vary in their approaches to many issues. We aim to incorporate elements from both the NHS and the University cultures.

Alongside this, we will develop processes and policies which encourage the embedding of research in routine healthcare practices. This will enable research from a range of specialities; therefore, increasing the reach of research to a wider range of patient populations.

NIHR Oxford CRF Participants

Many research studies which run in CRFs involve healthy volunteers. NIHR Oxford CRF will work to increase EDI in healthy volunteers who are involved and who participate in these studies. We will work with study teams and PIs to ensure diverse communities are reached and included when recruiting to the studies. We will specifically build on recent work by Richards et al to identify barriers and motivators to inclusion of ethnic minority participants in early phase clinical trial.

Current Practices

The Oxford NIHR CRF has the benefit of both the OUHT and UoO locally for the provision of EDI related training and initiatives. Both of which are considered in our strategy. Athena Swan has been established within the University for many years now, and, by proxy of collaboration, these feed into many of the local OUHT practices.

We are reviewing our study on-boarding process to identify any impediments to EDI, and how these could be addressed.

We are working with the NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) and local Athena Swan representatives to achieve our objectives set out below.

Being a new CRF, there will be a period of scoping and reflection exercises to ensure our actions are appropriate and practicable.

Action Plan

Oxford NIHR CRF Aims	Progress since start of project, impact and areas of improvement	Actions	Assessment/Measurement of success	Timescale	Responsibility
Work with institutional EDI teams to develop and deliver our strategy	To facilitate and monitor the EDI strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of established EDI practices Active utilisation of established staff training and awareness programmes through the Trust and University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDI Training opportunities included in CRF Staff Induction and training programmes Host an EDI workshop OUHT and UoO representatives for CRF staff 	<p>Training programme - Sept 2023</p> <p>Workshop – Sept 2024</p>	Operational Lead and QA Coordinator
Review current people; processes and participants to inform EDI actions	To assess our baseline – where we currently are in relation to EDI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use NIHR EDI questions to review the components of our committees; our study teams; our staff Use OUHT NHS Trust Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to check the EDI components within our practices Identify EDI impediments and assess how we can address these 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A baseline report to present and submit to NIHR Impediments identified and assessment on ways of addressing these Creation of an iterative strategy process that reflects assessment findings 	To be completed by end of 2023	CRF Operational Lead and EDI representatives from Trust & Uni
Promote non-medical lead research	To include research lead by clinicians other than medically qualified doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite non-medical Principal Investigators (PI) to submit applications Provide support and training for non-medical PIs in leading early-phase/experimental research Promote opportunities for non-medical PIs to lead studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bespoke training session for non-medical PIs At least 2 studies lead by non-medical PIs 	<p>Training session – end of 2025</p> <p>Non-medic PIs – end of 2026</p>	NIHR Oxford CRF Management Group
Promote junior investigators	To work with associate and junior PIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote opportunities for associate and junior PIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 5 Junior/Associate PIs leading studies 	First one at end of 2023	NIHR Oxford CRF Management Group

Improve EDI in healthy volunteers who are involved in early phase research	Incorporate output from Richards et al to identify barriers and motivators to inclusion of ethnic minority participants in early phase research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and monitor EDI in PPIE activities Improve EDI in healthy volunteers recruited to studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilisation of Richards et al approach 	End of 2026	Oxford NIHR CRF Management Group
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References:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2022-2027/31295>

<https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/athena-swan>

<http://ouh.oxnet.nhs.uk/Equality/Pages/Default.aspx>