

NIHR | Clinical Research Facility

**National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Facility: Oxford
Health Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework**

NIHR Clinical Research Facility: Oxford Health, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025 Update

Statement of Commitment

This document sets out the strategy and framework for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at the NIHR Clinical Research Facility (CRF): Oxford Health for 2022-2027.

Oxford Health CRF acknowledges the need for inclusivity within research. We see EDI as essential to research, and recognise the role that it has in strengthening our practice and enhancing the quality of our research. We acknowledge the need to embed meaningful and collaborative EDI practice in all CRF practices and systems. An important part of this involves embedding an inclusive culture in the CRF. Research opportunities should be accessible, person-centred, and represent the voices of diverse communities.

The Venza Global’s EDI Maturity Model (Figure 1) supports organisations to evaluate where they are on their diversity journey. It can be used to support EDI planning and goal setting. The CRF is currently in the “compliance” and early “discovery” stage. This document outlines our vision and action plan for EDI at the CRF. Goals and actions are included, which target the “discovery” stage of this model. This involves identifying and addressing gaps in our EDI practice.



Figure 1. Venza Global’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Maturity Model. D&I: Diversity and Inclusion

Our vision

Our vision for EDI, which is shared with the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre (BRC): Oxford Health, is as follows:

“With an underpinning commitment to Research Equality, we will work with partners to establish, and enhance, the evidence-base for EDI, focusing on relevant data collection and processes that will enhance the diversity of our research participants and workforce.”

Over the past year, the CRF has continued to strengthen its staff EDI working group, which now collaborates closely with both the Engage group and local research teams to ensure EDI is embedded across all activities. We have completed a further round of demographic data collection for research participants, with results being prepared for presentation at the UKCRF conference 2026 and for wider dissemination via our website. Our booking forms have been further refined to capture EDI needs more effectively, enabling staff to make appropriate adjustments ahead of participant visits.

The Engage (Patient and Public Involvement) group has maintained a diverse and appropriately sized membership, with new contributors joining to ensure fresh perspectives and meaningful discussion, as recommended in recent feedback. We have also aligned our EDI actions and training with R&D and BRC partners and have contributed to the Oxford NIHR Infrastructure EDI Working Group and Research Inclusion Survey. All actions and objectives have been developed in consultation with staff and public contributors and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain S.M.A.R.T. and responsive to NIHR guidance and local needs. Our partners and collaborators continue to play a central role in shaping and delivering our EDI strategy, supporting us to build on this progress over the next five years (see overarching goals and action plan). CRF studies usually come with their protocols and procedures in place. There are therefore limited opportunities for the CRF to influence the design of research trials. However, there are opportunities to embed EDI further into the local set-up, delivery and dissemination of research studies. There may be opportunities to influence the design of future studies, e.g. through effective feedback to central study teams.

Partners and collaborators

This strategy was developed and will be delivered in partnership with CRF staff (including the CRF EDI team and Senior Management Team), the Engage Group and Oxford Health BRC. Feedback from our local Participant Feedback Survey was also used to inform priority areas for this strategy. The strategy was written to reflect and feed into the NIHR [Research Inclusion strategy](#) and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust’s Equal Opportunities policy.

The Engage group meets every 2 months to provide a participant perspective on CRF activity. It includes past CRF research participants, as well as people with lived experience of mental and cognitive health conditions (either as someone with a diagnosis or supporting someone with a diagnosis). This group aims to include people from diverse backgrounds, with varying perspectives and experiences. This strategy’s actions and objectives were discussed with this group, and three members reviewed the strategy as a whole prior to submission. This group will continue to be central to the delivery of this strategy, advising on the activity surrounding the identified actions. A representative from the group will also be invited to join the CRF Steering Committee to feed into CRF governance.

The CRF values collaborative partnerships in the delivery of EDI work. The CRF will continue to partner and collaborate with research teams such as BRCs, Applied Research Collaborations, and other CRFs. We will continue to engage with local networks, and in collaborative activities. This includes Oxford Health's Experience and Involvement Team and EDI Team. This will help ensure that practices are in line with, and feed into, the Trust's wider vision and values.

Leadership and lines of reporting

The CRF's PPI Lead reports to the CRF Manager. They are both responsible for delivering, monitoring, reviewing and reporting on this strategy. They are members of the CRF's Senior Management Team, and will feed back on short-term strategy progress through this forum. The CRF EDI team will support the activities discussed in the action plan of this strategy. The strategy's overall progress will be reviewed at CRF Steering Group meetings, which a representative from the Engage group will be invited to. Accountability for achieving the EDI strategy is the responsibility of the CRF Director.

This strategy will be reviewed at least annually, and more regularly if needed. At review points, the CRF EDI team will mark actions as red (not started), amber (in progress) or green (completed). This will be discussed with the Engage group and fed back to the CRF Senior Management Team and Steering Committee. Actions marked as red and amber will be reviewed by the CRF EDI team to establish whether they are still feasible and a priority (if not, they will be replaced). Actions marked as green will be replaced with new actions, in partnership with the Engage group and CRF staff. Long-term goals and objectives will be reviewed at the CRF mid-term review, which takes place 2.5 years into the CRF funding award.

Further information

For more information about this strategy, please contact: oxfordhealth.crf@nhs.net

Overarching goals and action plan

We have identified the following goals, with long-term objectives and short-term actions:

GOAL 1: To gain a clearer picture of the demographic of people participating in research, in order to identify and approach communities who may be under-represented.

Long term objective (5 years)	Short term actions (by Final review – 5years)	How will we know if this action has been achieved?	Who will support this work?
<p>1.1 To continue to use appropriate methods for collecting and analysing demographic data for research participants in order for this data to have a meaningful impact on CRF practice.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Conduct the next round of demographic data analysis (August 2025), present findings at the UKCRF conference 2026, and consider publishing a paper.</p>	<p>Demographic data analysis completed, and findings presented at the UKCRF conference 2026. A summary report or poster published on the CRF website and/or submitted for publication. Annual contributor recruitment plans updated based on demographic analysis, with evidence of targeted outreach to under-represented groups. Year-on-year increase in diversity metrics tracked and reported to the Senior Management Team and Engage group. Feedback from Engage group and contributors on the inclusivity of recruitment processes documented in meeting minutes</p>	<p>CRF EDI team, with advice from the Research Facilitator on data analysis. The CRF Manager will oversee this project.</p>
	<p>1.1.2 Use demographic analysis to adapt contributor recruitment annually.</p>	<p>Regular demographic analysis and reporting. Evidence of increased diversity in research participation.</p>	

GOAL 2: To ensure communications are accessible and appropriate for diverse populations in order to increase inclusivity.

Long term objective (5 years)	Short term actions (by mid-term review – 2.5 years)	How will we know if this action has been achieved?	Who will support this work?
2.1 To continue to review communication systems to identify and address gaps relating to accessibility and inclusivity.	2.1.1 Collaborate with the Engage group and BRC to review and update the CRF website for accessibility (by September 2026). 2.1.2 Complete CRF video walkthrough Publish by January 2026 and update Accessible guide annually on website.	Website accessibility review completed, with documented feedback from the Engage group and actions taken to address recommendations. CRF video walkthrough published, and accessible guide updated annually; user feedback collected and reviewed.	The CRF Digital project, CRF PPI Lead, Engage group, Communications Manager (note the CRF and BRC share a communications manager, which supports the integration and sharing of online information between organisation platforms).
	2.1.2 Continue, to use established processes to feedback to study teams when accessibility needs are identified that relate to processes that are outside direct CRF control.	Number and nature of accessibility issues identified and escalated to study teams tracked and reported annually.	Study set up Lead and PPI Lead.
	2.1.3 Continue to implement the to social media plan to support CRF research activity. Include at least 2 blog posts by Engage members by March 2027	Social media plan and analytics reviewed annually to assess reach and engagement with diverse audiences. .	CRF Digital Project Lead, alongside CRF staff members. CRF SMT.

GOAL 3: To ensure that the CRF site and practices are accessible to people with physical, mental and cognitive health needs, and individual needs are identified and addressed.

Long term objective (5 years)	Short term actions (by mid-term review – 2.5 years)	How will we know if this action has been achieved?	Who will support this work?
<p>3.1 To increase staff awareness of the accessibility needs of CRF visitors.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Continued use of updated visit booking templates, co-designed with the Engage group, to identify and address individual accessibility needs.</p>	<p>Booking templates used for all study visits, with accessibility needs identified and addressed; compliance monitored quarterly.</p>	<p>CRF EDI team and study coordinators.</p>
	<p>3.1.2 Completed actions from plan for improvements from environmental survey of the CRF site</p>	<p>Environmental survey completed, action plan implemented, and improvements documented; progress reviewed annually.</p>	<p>CRF staff Engage group.</p>
	<p>3.1.3 promote and provide EDI training opportunities for staff, in partnership with the BRC (deliver four PPIE and EDI training sessions for staff and contributors by January 2027). 3.1.4 Broaden relationships with other trusts and CRFs, EG Centre for Ethnic Health Research in Leicester/ Manchester CRF, Southern Health Trusts</p>	<p>At least four PPIE and EDI training sessions delivered by January 2027; attendance records and participant feedback collected and reviewed. Evidence of new or strengthened partnerships with other trusts/CRFs, documented through increased collaboration.</p>	<p>CRF EDI team.</p>
<p>3.2 To continue to ensure that the directions for finding the CRF are as clear as possible.</p>	<p>3.2.1 Maintain relationship with Warneford Park through EBE/PPIE contributions (annually) LT</p>	<p>Directions and signage reviewed and updated annually, with feedback from visitors and the Engage group. EBE/PPIE contributions to Warneford Park documented in annual reports and meeting minutes. Visitor feedback on ease of access collected and reviewed; improvements made as needed.</p>	<p>PPI Lead, CRF Lead Nurse, Engage group, CRF administrators.</p>

GOAL 4: To establish, build, maintain and value relationships with our patient and public members together with Oxford Health BRC.

Long term objective (5 years)	Short term actions (by final review – 5 years)	How will we know if this action has been achieved?	Who will support this work?
<p>4.1 To continue to maintain a diverse PPI group (Engage group) in order to promote representation and diversity.</p>	<p>4.1.1 Build on existing partnerships with Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative, Clock house and Oxford Community Action, three local communities that represent young people, older adults and global minority exposed to social disadvantage and inequalities with attendance at 2 x events annually. 4.1.2 Develop a joint involvement plan to expand the wider contributor pool of people interested in mental health research. Monitor delivery and implementation annually through joint meeting and contributor feedback survey. (LT)</p>	<p>Attendance at a minimum of two community events annually, with participant feedback collected and reviewed.</p> <p>Joint involvement plan developed and implemented, with annual monitoring of contributor pool diversity and feedback from contributors.</p> <p>List of contacts and partnerships updated annually and shared with the BRC.</p> <p>Development of an EDI pack to go out to events.</p>	<p>CRF EDI team in collaboration with Oxford Health researchers.</p>
<p>4.2 To continue to contribute to events/activities which aim to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, and to promote PPI input within mental health research.</p>	<p>4.2.1 For CRF staff to continue to provide support for at least one collaborative community engagement project per year. This could include attendance at third sector events such as Dementia Information Days, community days, “Meet the researcher” session, and outreach events within specific local communities.</p>	<p>At least one collaborative community engagement project supported and delivered each year, with evidence of CRF staff involvement.</p> <p>Feedback from event participants and partners collected and reviewed; outcomes and learning points documented.</p> <p>Increased awareness and reduced stigma around mental health evidenced through participant surveys or qualitative feedback.</p>	<p>CRF EDI team alongside CRF staff.</p>