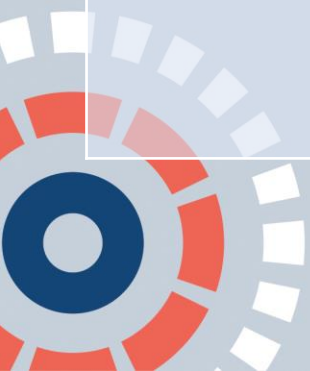


**The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)
Manchester Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) and NIHR
Manchester Clinical Research Facility (CRF):
Inclusive Research examples**



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| Case Title | Advancing effective EDI practices and capacity building for inclusive research within the RMD theme. (Content based on RMD Baseline EDI survey for 2025) |
| BRC Cluster(s) | Inflammation |
| BRC Theme(s) | Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases (RMD) |
| Inclusive Research Element | Implementing effective EDI practices to embed and promote inclusive research within research teams. |
| Rationale for case study | This case study evidences the RMD Theme’s commitment to advancing effective EDI practices and building capacity for inclusive research. Drawing on the 2025 baseline EDI survey, it highlights strategic actions taken to embed inclusivity across leadership, training, and patient engagement—demonstrating meaningful change and alignment with NIHR’s goal of reducing health inequalities and improving outcomes. |
| Background | <p>Informed by the 2025 RMD Baseline EDI survey, the RMD Theme has taken a strategic approach to advancing inclusive research, aiming to ensure that both the workforce and research participants reflect the diversity of the communities served.</p> <p>The theme benefits from a balanced and diverse leadership team—45% female and 40% non-clinical—and maintains strong collaborative links with the University of Manchester’s School of Biological Sciences EDI committee. This partnership has enabled the sharing of best practices and the integration of inclusive tools, such as team inclusivity spreadsheets, into broader BRC EDI toolkits.</p> <p>Training and development have been central to the theme’s efforts. All university staff completed updated mandatory EDI training in early 2025, and similar requirements are in place for NHS staff. The theme also delivers EDI workshops for early career researchers and recently ran neurodiversity training.</p> <p>Inclusive research practices are a vital to the RMD Theme’s work. The patient network, established over a decade ago, is supported by a dedicated PPIE/EDI team working across themes and with community partners. Strategic engagement with diverse communities—including the Indian and African communities—and collaboration with the BAME Research Advisory Group (BRAG) have strengthened the theme’s commitment to inclusive participation. Additionally, anonymised EDI data collection from study participants has begun, with guidance developed in partnership with the BRC Inclusive Research Oversight Board (IROB).</p> <p>Despite these strengths, the theme acknowledges ongoing challenges, particularly in supporting underrepresented groups and navigating institutional complexities between the University and NHS trusts. Nonetheless, the RMD Theme continues to build on its foundation, identifying opportunities to share knowledge, improve transparency in talent development, and lead research into health inequalities.</p> |



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| <p>What we did</p> | <p>We strengthened leadership diversity, achieving a balanced team with 45% female and 40% non-clinical representation, and established strong links with the University of Manchester’s School of Biological Sciences EDI committee. This collaboration enabled the integration of inclusive tools—such as a team inclusivity spreadsheet—into BRC-wide EDI toolkits.</p> <p>We ensured University staff completed updated mandatory EDI training in February 2025, monitored at the faculty level, and supported NHS staff in meeting core EDI training requirements. We also delivered EDI workshops for early career researchers and planned additional training on neurodiversity.</p> <p>Our inclusive research practices were enhanced through a well-established patient network and a dedicated PPIE/EDI team (including VOCAL) working across themes and with community partners. We organised engagement activities including British Science Week, Community Festivals, and annual appreciation events. We consulted with the BAME Research Advisory Group (BRAG) and built long-term relationships with local Indian and African communities, integrating their voices into research advisory networks.</p> <p>We supported diverse candidates in the Rising Star programme, offering feedback, mock interviews, and PPIE planning for funding applications. Five external fellowships were awarded in the past two years, with recipients including women, non-clinicians, and individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>We initiated the collection of anonymised EDI data from study participants, with ethical approval and guidance developed in collaboration with the BRC Inclusive Research Oversight Board (IROB), enabling broader rollout across the BRC.</p> |
| <p>What the outcome(s) is/are</p> | <p>Achieved a more diverse leadership team (45% female, 40% non-clinical). Delivered mandatory EDI training across University and NHS staff. Supported five successful fellowship applications from diverse candidates. Strengthened community engagement with Indian and African groups. Rolled out anonymised EDI data collection across studies. Shared inclusive tools and practices across the wider BRC.</p> |
| <p>Conclusions</p> | <p>The RMD Theme has made significant strides in embedding EDI across its research and workforce practices. Through strategic leadership, inclusive training, community engagement, and data-driven approaches, the theme is fostering a more equitable research environment. These efforts not only benefit researchers and participants but also contribute to broader NIHR goals of reducing health inequalities and improving outcomes.</p> |
| <p>Recommendations</p> | <p>We will: Continue to improve inclusive practices and share resources between the theme and EDI team. Develop strategies to address challenges faced by underrepresented groups at different career stages. Work with the UoM School of Biological Sciences' EDI committee to implement solutions for early career researchers.</p> |
| <p>Future work</p> | <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write a case report for our inclusive PPIE work diversifying participants in research studies. • We will review the Rising Star Selection and author guidance toolkits to make these processes more transparent. • We will continue to offer support for grant applications and ensuring EDI is included as part of applications. This could perhaps include ambassadors for grant applications |

