



Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in research – NICHS position.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke (NICHS) is committed to upholding and promoting equality, diversity, and non-discrimination. We are committed to ensuring all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background in all aspects of its work in line with the Northern Ireland Order 2003 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

What is EDI and PPI?

EDI stands for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. EDI is about promoting fairness, recognising differences, and ensuring that everyone feels included in our research programme and have an equal opportunity to apply for our research grant funding.

PPI stands for Personal and Public Involvement. PPI is about giving everyone the opportunity to be meaningfully involved in research, whether it be having a say or being involved in its design and conduct.

Purpose

The purpose of this position paper is to embed EDI into our research programme, and as a result, the research we fund. The paper outlines what we expect of researchers who apply for and/or receive NICHS research funding.

General

We believe in funding the best research, and we are committed to using our funding programme to encourage a diverse and inclusive research culture across Northern Ireland. This includes:

- **Fair and transparent funding:** we will ensure that our funding programme is fair and inclusive. Success is determined by clearly described criteria and processes.
- **Fair and transparent decision making:** we will adhere to the principles of expert review. We will ensure that membership to any committee / panels that have a say in our grant decision is fair and inclusive.
- **Career support and development:** we will work with researchers to help them develop their potential and help us achieve our vision of a Northern Ireland free of chest, heart, and stroke conditions.
- **Inclusive research design:** we will prioritise funding research that clearly demonstrates a commitment to the principles of EDI and PPI.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** to help us achieve all these things, we will monitor, analyse, and publish diversity data. We will use this data to improve our processes and programme.

Our EDI in research policy is part of the organisation's wider EDI policy. See also [NICHS | Modern Slavery Statement](#) and Human Rights policy (available on request).

What we expect from organisations we fund

We expect organisations to follow relevant legislation, specifically those that apply to Northern Ireland, or equivalent as appropriate.

[ECNI - The Law, Equality Legislation, Equality Commission, Northern Ireland](#)

We expect organisations¹ we fund to have policies in place that prevent and address discrimination, set expectations for those involved in research on equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion, and clearly set out the standards of behaviour it expects. It is the organisation's responsibility to make sure there are equivalent policies in place that cover any third party or partner organisation.

Organisations (to which funded researchers are employed / affiliated) must investigate allegations of discrimination in an impartial, fair, and timely manner. They must:

- protect the rights of all involved;
- take appropriate action, including ensuring the immediate safety of the people involved and reporting incidents to other bodies as required by law, regulation, and the organisations' own policies; and
- at the point of applying to our grants programme, confirm that the Principal Applicant (and sponsor and supervisor, if relevant) has not had an allegation of discrimination upheld against them for which there is either a current formal disciplinary warning or an active sanction.

Research we fund should be inclusive in a way that is appropriate. While not all research we fund will require co-creation or patient-led involvement, we do expect our partners to take seriously the needs and values of the key beneficiaries of research where relevant.

We want access to our funding to be open and accessible to anyone who is eligible under the terms and conditions of the programme. We expect research and/or team leaders we fund, and the organisations they are based at, to:

- provide equitable opportunities across all tasks assigned within a research team/group;
- when composing research teams, consider people from diverse backgrounds for team members. This includes PPI;
- consider the diversity of the relevant communities when building research team;
- make training and development opportunities equitably available to all, and ensure that all team members are suitably trained in EDI; and
- provide equitable and meaningful PPI opportunities when designing research.

¹ to which the researcher and their team are affiliated / employed

As part of their research proposal, applicants are encouraged to describe:

- the characteristics of the population groups or subpopulations who could benefit from the research being proposed, including how this might contribute to health equity;
- the approach that they have taken to addressing EDI and PPI, and promoting inclusion of these groups throughout their research; and
- explain or justify why this approach has been taken.

Grant holders are expected to record and report relevant information about the diversity characteristics of research participants and their research team. This should be available even if these characteristics are not used in the analyses.

We will maintain broad eligibility criteria for grant applicants; recognising that good ideas can come from researchers at any career stage, and from a diverse range of experts.

Monitoring and evaluation

- We will monitor diversity within our grant application and award process and act on anything that suggests bias in our funding decisions.
- Monitor and improve, when necessary, the diversity on our Scientific Research Committee.
- Continue to monitor and improve PPI within our grants programme. We will strive to represent the real diversity of people living with chest, heart, and stroke conditions in our research programme.
- We will communicate with supporters in ways that are accessible and inclusive.
- We will monitor and improve the accessibility of our grants programme. For example, we will:
 - ensure our grant application instructions are simple, clear and easy to read especially for researchers whose first language is not English;
 - maintain an in-house support team who respond to questions quickly; and
 - incorporate assistive technology where possible.
- We will track funding data to ensure our research programme remains sufficiently broad, representing chest, heart, and stroke.
- In the longer term, look at what we can do to ensure results of the research we fund are representative of, and translate to those living with chest, heart, and stroke conditions.
- NICHHS will develop relevant metrics to monitor and evaluate compliance with this policy.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates will be made as necessary to reflect changes in legislation and best practices.

Approved by: SLT

Date: 21.05. 2025