



# Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equipping leaders to improve patient outcomes  
and move towards workforce equality

## 9 out of 10

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healthcare leaders agree that addressing health inequalities should be a priority for the NHS\*

## Fewer than half

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of healthcare leaders feel they have the knowledge, tools and support to tackle health inequalities

## More than half

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of healthcare leaders have concerns about institutional racism within the NHS

## Racism

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embedded in the NHS's organisational culture and norms prevents progress on healthcare staff inequities\*\*

\* Unless otherwise stated, the stats relate to a 2020 NHS Confederation member survey

\*\* Tackling Inequalities and Discrimination Experiences in Health Services (TIDES) study 2021

\*\*\*ClearView Research Insights 2020 on the Black Community and Human Rights

## Fewer than half

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of healthcare leaders are confident their board will be representative of their local community within the next five years

## Almost two-thirds

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of black people think the NHS does less to protect their health than that of white people\*\*\*

## 75% of healthcare leaders agree

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that black and minority ethnic communities have poorer access to and outcomes from NHS services

# Introduction

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are at the core of NHS leadership and the delivery of healthcare services. They ensure fairness for our workforce, equitable access and excellent experience, and optimal outcomes for those served by the NHS.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the stark differences experienced by people working in the NHS and those receiving health and care services. Inequality is at its root.

Being able to understand the inequality challenges faced by others brings out leadership strength and improves quality of care for all.

That's why we've developed our EDI programme – strategic support to equip and enable healthcare leaders to tackle inequalities. We work with you to realise equitable outcomes for patients and service users, and to move towards workforce equality.

Offering practical guidance, insightful resources and unrivalled opportunities to connect and network, we support you to promote inclusive leadership capability, have confidence in those with lived experience, and to develop your people and leadership pipeline for the future.

“As leaders, we all have a part to play in ensuring EDI is at the heart of all we do. To be successful, we need support and we need to help each other. The NHS Confederation’s role in this is key – connecting us to each other, experts and policymakers.”

**Rob Webster CBE, Chief Executive, West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership**



Our programme complements national, regional and local strategies on EDI and health inequalities, developing inclusive leadership as the key to achieving greatest impact for your staff and the communities you serve.

Through our EDI programme, we provide support to help you improve equity, leadership and accountability to tackle workforce and health inequality, and generate lasting change through your evolving inclusive leadership.

### Our programme provides

- **influence and voice** – for you as a leader and as part of a strong EDI leadership community
- **thought leadership and exposure to new ideas** – through our sessions for chairs and chief executives and regular events for board members
- **improvement initiatives** – including our Healthcare Inequalities Improvement Programme
- **peer support and valuable connections** – through our diverse leadership networks
- **safe space for critical reflection** – with our one-to-one feedback and support loop for chairs and chief executives
- **support in identifying and developing collaborative programmes** – boosting your EDI ambitions, with support for EDI practitioners
- **access to EDI tools and resources** – via our resource hub, developed by members for members
- **access to the independent NHS Race and Health Observatory** – a pioneering body, hosted by the NHS Confederation, which examines the health inequalities experienced by black and minority ethnic communities in England.

# Improving equity, leadership and accountability

Our programme – informed by a reference group of senior leaders across the healthcare system – focuses on three key themes:

## 1. Equity

**Empowering members to lead through community and workforce engagement, and strategic partnerships with diverse / black and minority ethnic communities in particular.**

We work with a wide range of staff, communities and partners to develop and lead radical approaches to ensure equity within the NHS workforce and local communities, improving health outcomes for all.

## 2. Leadership

**Supporting members to build a diverse leadership, with strategic and operational focus on delivering equity in the workforce and in health outcomes.**

We promote supporting and valuing the workforce to deliver their best, in an environment free from discrimination, delivering better health outcomes for our communities and reducing health inequalities.

Our leadership support networks (see page 9) and the Diversity in Health and Care Partners Programme, led by NHS Employers, are key to this work. Our BME Leadership Network, for example, advocates targeted interventions and prioritises targets around staff anti-racism training and recruitment.

### 3. Accountability

**Ensuring a clear and effective system of accountability, assisting leaders to deliver their commitment to EDI that improves health outcomes.**

We equip you to fulfil your personal accountabilities for delivering effective EDI practice that prioritises race equality, addresses workforce inequalities and tackles the wider determinants impacting health inequalities.

This approach provides a vision to support and inspire leaders to evolve their inclusive leadership, aiming to ensure equity and improve health outcomes for all with particular reference to the challenges faced by black and minority ethnic groups, as outlined in our Race Equality Strategy ([www.nhsconfed.org/edi](http://www.nhsconfed.org/edi)).

“Tackling inequality was one of the principal reasons for establishing the NHS and it transformed the lives of patients. Future transformation of healthcare services and our workforce can only succeed by once again placing the inequalities agenda at the centre of everything we do.”

**Joan Saddler OBE, Director of Partnerships and Equality, NHS Confederation**



# Learn, improve and influence

We are working with leaders across the country to better serve their local communities by putting EDI at the heart of what they do. Here's a snapshot of some of our activity.

## Addressing health inequalities

**As leaders you are telling us that lasting change is required through the adoption of new approaches to tackling inequality in healthcare and inequalities more generally in our society.**

We are working with healthcare leaders to adopt new approaches to tackling health inequalities, providing programmes of learning supported by insightful case studies and practical tools. We are also creating opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, to help develop best practice approaches that can be adopted locally.

## Moving to diverse board leadership

**You are telling us that a critical step-change is needed to harness all the talents of your workforce.**

We are working with the NHS England and NHS Improvement's chief people officer and the NHS Leadership Academy to deliver a programme of support as the integrated care systems appoint to their boards. We are supporting leaders to develop more diverse and inclusive leadership throughout their organisations and systems.

## Developing inclusive workplace cultures

**Our Diversity in Health and Care Partners Programme, led by NHS Employers, supports health and care organisations to create inclusive workplace cultures where uniqueness of beliefs, backgrounds and ways of living are welcomed and celebrated.**

The programme has supported more than 300 organisations over the last decade, making change happen by working with EDI practitioners, encouraging collaborative working, and sharing innovation and best practice.

# Share, strengthen and celebrate

Our free EDI leadership networks strengthen the voice of their members, giving them a national platform and celebrating their contributions. By convening emerging and established leaders from across the system, they offer a unique space for learning and insight.

By joining our leadership networks, you can:

- **connect with peers** from across health and care
- **use your voice to support and influence change** across the system
- **be part of a social movement at senior level**
- **receive regular updates and reports** on relevant issues, attend events and masterclasses
- **share learning** through podcasts, blogs, videos, key reports and tweet chats.

## BME Leadership Network

Strengthening the voice of black and minority ethnic leaders, raising the profile of BME leaders and increasing the number of BME leaders working in the NHS.

**Open to all NHS leaders from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and supporters.**

 @NHSC\_BMELeaders

## Health and Care Women Leaders Network

A strong, united and influential voice for women. Recognising the skills and talents of women and their impact across health and care, and challenging bias against women in the workplace.

**Open to all women and supporters working across health and care.**

 @hcwomenleaders

## Health and Care LGBTQ+ Leaders Network

Improving the experience of LGBTQ+ staff and patients and increasing LGBTQ+ representation in senior leadership to influence change across the system.

**Open to all LGBTQ+ leaders and supporters responsible for inspiring, motivating and bringing people to action.**

 @NHSC\_LGBTQ

“The NHS was not designed for inequality or inequity; it was designed to eradicate it. It should shame us that we are heading in the wrong direction. We must make this core business.”

**Lord Victor Adebowale, Chair  
NHS Confederation**



# Get involved

We equip leaders to improve patient outcomes and move towards workforce equality through practical, evidence-based approaches.



Visit our **web section** to find out more about our work and access tools and resources.



Join our free **EDI leadership networks**.



Sign up for the **Diversity in Health and Care Partners Programme**.



**Share how you as a leader** are making a difference to inequality in the NHS.

# Want to find out more?

Please email us at [edi@nhsconfed.org](mailto:edi@nhsconfed.org)

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