

Tackling Inequalities Leadership Programme

Practical support for EDI directors and senior responsible officers delivering strategic workforce and health equity programmes and interventions

Foreword

As the NHS Confederation, we fundamentally believe that without tackling inequalities the NHS will not transform. Success is therefore dependent on a practical approach to tackling inequality as a core function for all health and care organisations, appropriately resourced and with robust strategic support from senior leadership.

The NHS Confederation is the membership organisation that brings together and speaks for the whole healthcare system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Supporting the need for collaboration and inclusivity across systems, we work with leaders to develop their skills, equipping them with tools, ideas and insights, and connecting them with a community of their peers.

Our support offer enhances the existing skills of leaders working within healthcare organisations, to tackle inequality in both the workforce and the design and delivery of services.

Foreword continues...



Matthew Taylor
Chief Executive,
NHS Confederation



Joan Saddler OBE
Director of Partnerships
and Equality,
NHS Confederation

We have co-designed this ambitious offer with members, as a clear value-add for the NHS workforce and with a view to improving access, experience and outcomes for those served by the NHS.

Foreword continued...

The programme rests on three key pillars, aligned with the NHS Confederation's three-part leadership support pledge:



Represent

Participants will be supported to build a national profile for the tackling inequalities agenda coordinating an approach to influencing decision-makers based on first-hand knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)/health inequalities in practice.



Support

Individuals will be supported to develop their leadership capability and their expertise within the field of tackling inequality, and to showcase the high standard of existing practice in this area.



Connect

Participants will be encouraged to work collaboratively with peers, both within and across systems, forming place-based partnerships as well as national alliances in order to share innovation and best practice, and make change happen.

The Tackling Inequalities Leadership Programme is built on a foundation of experience within the NHS Confederation, having delivered a range of successful programmes supporting those working on the EDI agenda. This offer was co-designed with members as a clear value-add for the NHS workforce and with a view to improving access, experience and outcomes for those served by the NHS.

You are warmly invited to join this year's programme, starting in October 2025. This brochure provides an overview of the programme, who it's aimed at, the benefits of participating, and costs.

Should you have any questions please contact:

✉ partnershipsandequality@nhsconfed.org

Overview

As leaders at the forefront of tackling inequality, you should be supported to develop your skills as valued experts within your organisations. You also should have clear opportunities for progression, supporting leadership development for others.

The Tackling Inequalities Leadership Programme provides the development and support to help you progress in your personal leadership goals, and to put your organisation at the forefront of tackling inequality.

It supports:



Leaders

Leaders to position their practice as a key strategic function within their organisation.



Delivery

The delivery of the EDI/health inequalities agenda as part of general business strategy, leveraging it to improve upon operational performance.



Organisations

Organisations to develop thematic approaches to reducing inequalities, based on cross-cutting themes drawn from expert collaboration between system representatives.



Exchange

The exchange of expertise and development of thought leadership by those leading the charge on this important work.

The programme provides access to experts and decision-makers from across the UK, offering a cohesive national picture and opportunities to influence at the highest levels, which may not always be available to individual organisations.

Who the programme is for

To take part in this programme you will be in a key position within your organisation, contributing to its success through strategically developing EDI throughout the workforce and service design and delivery.

With the need for strong influencing and advocacy in this strategic role, you will understand the benefits of connecting with other EDI professionals facing similar challenges in meeting organisational priorities, and the wealth of knowledge that peer support can bring.



Organisations

Integrated care systems

NHS provider organisations:
acute, community and mental
health trusts



Individuals

Directors, associate directors and
high-level strategic leads for EDI
or health inequalities

“The programme enabled me to develop my thinking and take time out to connect and reflect with colleagues across the NHS. It always topped me up with renewed and refreshed energy in respects of my role and my influence on others. The programme content was informative, empowering, current, refreshing, and safe. I would highly recommend board level and senior leaders to embrace this learning and development opportunity. Thank you, NHS Confederation.”

Emma Wilkins, Deputy People Director, The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

What to expect

As a programme participant, you will benefit from a comprehensive syllabus, designed to centre your personal development as an EDI professional and a key contributor to the success of your organisation.

You will join a cohort of strategic leaders working in partnership to influence NHS decision-making. As a group you will network, collaborate and share best practice, pooling knowledge of systems and the organisations within them, to develop models and frameworks to tackle inequality at scale.

The programme provides access to the NHS Confederation's internal and external community of EDI specialists, along with the latest innovations shared by participating partner organisations.

The programme will be facilitated across six themes:



Practice

Going beyond compliance, working to ensure that the deeper and systemic changes necessary to successfully embed diversity and inclusion are discussed and are available to be actioned by members.



Strategy

Raising expectations from systems in relation to EDI strategies and their core impact on quality and safety improvement. Establishing the importance of communicating the longer-term impact of reducing inequalities as well as short-term metrics.



Workforce

Centring the NHS as a values-based employer. Shining a spotlight on the latest thinking, evidence-based research findings and practices that further develop excellence in inclusive workforce cultures.



Partnerships

Providing opportunities to gain maximum benefit from the power of networking, reinforcing the importance of peer support and the amplification of the voice of EDI. Connecting this work to the wider agenda of eliminating inequalities within health and care, and beyond.



Health inequalities

Empowering leaders to move beyond the identification of inequalities to take the strategic actions needed to eliminate them. Defining a cohesive approach to tackling inequality generally by utilising effective EDI.



Influence

Sharing the collective wisdom and expertise of our EDI leaders, helping to achieve national transformation on EDI and health inequalities and to give this work the platform it deserves.

Programme delivery

This expertise and learning will be delivered through a series of events and masterclasses, starting in October 2025:

1

Two full-day face-to-face learning events with high-profile external speakers and the opportunity for in-person networking and collaboration.

2

The latest EDI thinking through our specialist virtual masterclasses, designed and delivered by experts in the field of behavioural science and EDI.

3

Four half-day interactive modules providing an opportunity to meet virtually, listen to EDI experts and participate in trouble-shooting sessions.

4

Influence the implementation of key national pieces of work, such as NHS England's EDI Improvement Strategy.

In addition:

Develop relationships with peers and network with health and social care leaders, industry experts and our expert EDI team at the NHS Confederation.

Receive our EDI newsletter, providing the latest insights including news, campaigns, case studies, blogs and event information.

Opportunities to showcase your work nationally via this programme and on the NHS Confederation website.

Ensure issues raised by partners are shared with the various networks that make up the NHS Confederation, including NHS Employers; Acute Network; Community Network; ICS Network; Mental Health Network; Primary Care Network; BME Leadership Network; Health and Care LGBTQ+ Leaders Network; and Health and Care Women Leaders Network.



The NHS Confederation EDI programme

Through the NHS Confederation's EDI programme, many organisations have already been supported to:

Focus on recruitment processes and their leadership development programme.

Implement changes to increase applicants from BME and disabled communities.

Give impetus for board-level conversations about EDI.

Develop an inclusion strategy.

Implement an executive sponsorship programme for inclusion.

Find out more about our [EDI programme](#)



Cost

£3,500 + VAT per annum
per organisation.



"This programme enables me to cement the role of EDI as part of my trust's general business strategy, leveraging it to improve the organisation's operational performance and service delivery."

Clive Clarke, Director of Inclusion, Nottingham University Hospitals

Contact us

Please email us at

partnershipsandequality@nhsconfed.org

Connect with us



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NHS Confederation

NHS Confederation

18 Smith Square, Westminster,
London, SW1P 3HZ

Tel: 020 7799 6666

Email: enquiries@nhsconfed.org

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