

## **INVITATION TO TENDER**

**Exploration of current practice to reduce ethnic health inequalities within healthcare education.**

**Date: April 2024**

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## About the commissioners

The NHS Race and Health Observatory ('the Observatory') is an independent organisation, set up to explore and tackle ethnic inequalities in access to healthcare, experiences of healthcare, health outcomes, and inequalities experienced by Black and minority ethnic members of the health and care workforce. In doing so, it assesses aspirations in these areas as outlined in national healthcare policy, including those set-out in the NHS Long Term Plan. It is a proactive investigator, providing strong recommendations that inform policymaking and facilitate change. It is evidence-driven and solution-focused.

The Observatory is supported by NHS England and hosted by NHS Confederation. The Observatory's board and team are independent, and it dictates its own direction and areas of focus. The Observatory has three main functions:

- facilitating new, high-quality, and innovative research and evidence
- making strategic policy recommendations for change
- supporting the practical implementation of those recommendations.

The Observatory is working in partnership with the Workforce, Training, and Education (WTE) Directorate, NHS England. The WTE Directorate integrates the workforce delivery portfolio of Health Education England (HEE) into NHS England as set out in [NHSE Operating Framework 2022](#) thus continuing to ensure that the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to the patients and public of England is delivered by the workforce of today and tomorrow with the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place.

[The Educator Workforce Strategy](#) (March 2023) was established to set out actions that will lead to sufficient capacity and quality of educators to allow the growth in healthcare workforce that is needed to deliver care now and in the future. Priority 6: Promoting the NHS aspirations to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion, is described as an urgent priority. The Observatory and NHSE are collaborating to support educators in understanding and addressing ethnic health inequalities and discrimination in education.

To begin this process, we are commissioning a research project to explore current approaches to decolonising healthcare education; and introduce anti-racism principles in clinical education and training, as a route to addressing ethnic health inequalities. This scoping work is intended to guide implementation of the Educator Workforce Strategy through all six of the workstreams which link to specific guidance documents.

## Scope of the work

### Background

Migrant and ethnic minority communities face many challenges within healthcare systems as patients, clinicians, and healthcare students. For ethnic health inequalities to be addressed, changes need to be made within our healthcare systems. Healthcare professionals' education is formative in the development of practitioners' approaches to practice. It is therefore important to understand how healthcare curricula are taught, what they contain, and whether they are reflective of the diverse populations that healthcare professionals will be working with.

There is racism and discrimination within the NHS, affecting both our workforce and the population's health. Numerous reports including the Observatory's [Rapid Evidence Review](#), highlight the role of education to create a change in this narrative. Our review, as well as Michael Marmot's 2020 [report](#), emphasised the effects of colonialism and structural racism, and the overwhelming need to deal with such racism in combating the social determinants of health inequalities.

There is an acknowledgement of the need to diversify and decolonise health professions' curricula ([BMJ 2018](#)), and an understanding that healthcare professionals are not routinely trained to address racism or ethnic health inequalities. Regulatory bodies such as the General Medical Council (GMC), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) all have professional standards which include reference to inclusive culture. However, there are numerous accounts of discrimination in clinical practice as well as curricula that are not diverse in terms of ethnic representation and lack content on health inequalities. Healthcare curricula are often White-European centric and do not prepare our future workforce for the ethnically diverse communities that they will be working in. This lack of teaching and understanding of anti-racist practice can lead to discrimination, poor health outcomes, and safety issues.

Several Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have started to explore ways to reduce ethnic inequalities in health and healthcare through education. Concepts such as "decolonising curricula" and using an "anti-racist" approach to healthcare education have been implemented. The Observatory and NHS England would like to explore current practices in education and training that aim to reduce ethnic health inequalities; the main drivers of success for these programmes; and how these practices have been influenced by policy, student voice and other factors. This information will be used to inform the implementation of the [Educator Workforce Strategy](#).

### Project outline

By creating and implementing an inclusive and anti-racist curriculum and fostering an inclusive learning environment, we can empower the future health care workforce to recognise the factors that contribute to ethnic health inequalities in health and

healthcare. This preparation would enable them to effectively address disparities in healthcare outcomes and experience through practice.

This project aims to explore existing initiatives designed to integrate decolonisation and anti-racist principles into clinical education in the context of reducing ethnic health disparities. The primary focus is to identify successful strategies, understand their key drivers and assess transferability to other areas. This will involve identifying overarching principals and practical ideas that education providers can adopt.

The Observatory and NHS England would like to commission an organisation to hold a series of discovery workshops with key stakeholders to understand what current practices are being used to reduce ethnic health inequalities within healthcare education. The successful bid will be able to incorporate this information alongside awareness of relevant research and policy documents to create recommendations and collate common themes for successful design and implementation of these practices.

Successful bids should consider, at least, curriculum content, experiences of pre- and post-registration learners, the learning environment, clinical placement, patient safety, and allyship. The emphasis should be on a potential link between education and the broader population's benefit in reducing ethnic health inequalities, while underscoring its significant impact on learners' development and understanding how implementing effective practices benefits learners and contributes to reducing health inequalities in diverse populations.

### **Proposed methodology**

The Observatory is committed to fostering innovation and embracing codesign principles in the research project outlined above. We encourage organisations to propose novel and creative approaches that actively involve relevant stakeholders in shaping the methodology, for research that is comprehensive, inclusive, and has greater potential for impact.

Though we welcome bids that play to the strengths of bidding organisations, we invite you to consider the following steps as part of your proposed methodology:

- Creation of steering group with key stakeholders including, but not restricted to, learners, faculty, regulatory bodies, the Observatory, and NHS England.
- Synthesis of existing evidence from literature and policy regarding the connections between ethnic health inequalities and healthcare education to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape.
- Structured engagement (which may include interviews and/or surveys) of:
  - Individuals with relevant lived experience i.e. learners, educators, and patients

- Representatives of a diverse range of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups to better understand attitudes and perceived priorities in healthcare education.
- Healthcare professionals and educators in a range of relevant roles.
- Key policymakers in these areas.
- Professional bodies and regulators.
- NIHR Academic Health Science Centres for example AHSC, ARCs etc.
- Collation of at least 5 relevant and varied case studies of good practice from across the system. This should include examples from a wide range of Higher Education Institutions and other learning environments including the clinical workplace, and include:
  - What were the key drivers of change?
  - Who was involved in design and implementation?
  - What were the key changes that are needed in the curricula?
  - What are the anticipated benefits and impact to learners, organisations, and populations?
  - What were the key challenges?
  - How will this be sustained and potentially disseminated?

If your organisation believes it can fulfil some aspects of the proposed methodology but not all, we encourage you to consider a collaborative approach. The Observatory recognises the power of collaboration and the potential for multiple organisations to pool their expertise and resources to achieve a greater impact. Please get in touch if you require further information on this.

## **Outputs**

At the end of the research period, the successful organisation should produce the following:

- A detailed report of the background, methodology, findings, recommendations, and summary of principles of good practice that make specific links to The Workforce Education Strategy.
- An executive summary and lay summary for broader dissemination.
- Stakeholder informed recommendations for good practice in education, clinical practice, regulation, and future research. These recommendations should be validated by a broad range of experts and stakeholders. It is important that all recommendations are targeted at specific organisations and are practically actionable.
- These resources will be added to the existing NHSE [Educator Workforce Strategy Repository](#) as well as used in the guidance documents that support implementation of the strategy.

The successful organisation will also be expected to produce an interim progress report at the mid-way point of the project, and to present their findings to the Observatory and its academic reference group at the end of research period.

### **Detailed specifications**

- The initial research period will be 12 months from the date of award, with a further 3-4 weeks for review and sign off. Longer periods may be considered if justification for the longer timescale can be provided.
- The review should include both academic and grey literature (government and NHS reports as well as community-produced and experience-based evidence)
- The research should include extensive and meaningful community engagement at all stages, including initial scoping and assurance of final conclusions and recommendations. The community could include students, service users, HEI staff, professional bodies, etc.
- Quality criteria should be applied to evidence including, where appropriate, evidence of user-validation and stakeholder validity. Development and appropriate use of steering group to ensure quality assurance.
- The final report should take the form of a word document and will be primarily branded in the NHS Race and Health Observatory's house style (with co-branding considered where appropriate). Additionally, we welcome innovative approaches for presenting the findings, such as infographics, videos, animations, or other formats that enhance accessibility and understanding.
- We welcome bids up to £80K. Higher value bids may be considered if adequate justification can be given for the additional amount.
- The report will be for external publication.

### **Tender submission**

Your tender submission should be organised under the following headings:

#### **'Project plan' to include:**

- An introduction illustrating your understanding of the brief, and of the role that race and racism play in determining differential experience and outcomes.
- A summary project plan including details of your proposed methodology and approach to community engagement.
- A timeline including key dates to demonstrate how you would meet the proposed deadline.
- An indication of how much input and capacity would be required from the Observatory team.
- Details of key personnel who will be involved in the project.
- Key risks and mitigating actions for the project

#### **'Fee proposal' to include:**

- Costings for the work including VAT.
- A detailed budget covering both personnel costs and any non-pay expenses.
- The costs of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.

**‘Company information’ to include:**

- A brief outline of your values, structure, size, and capabilities in general.
- Detail of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.
- An explanation of the unique benefit you will bring to this work.
- Details of how you propose to ensure GDPR compliance, as appropriate.

**‘Supporting Evidence’ to include:**

- Examples of at least two similar tenders you have won and delivered.
- The details of two previous clients (preferably not for profit) that we can contact for reference purposes (references will be taken up for firms shortlisted).
- At least two examples of written reports produced by the intended primary author(s). Any written outputs from this project will be expected to meet the standard of provided examples.
- A completed equalities questionnaire (see schedule 1).

**Selection criteria**

We will rank tenders on the basis of:

1. Overall fit to requirements of the brief and proposed methods.
2. A proven track record of impactful high quality previous work in the area.
3. Relevant experience of team, including a demonstration of cultural competence, understanding of precision medicine, and an ability to engage with issues around ethnic health inequality and racism.
4. Value for money to the Observatory.
5. Your approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.



## Key Dates

ITT released	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2024
Deadline for bids	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
Potential follow-up interviews	24 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
Contract awarded	September 2024
Interim report	April 2025
Draft full report	July 2025
Final report	Sept 2025

Instructions for the return of the tenders

**Tenders should be submitted by email to [info@nhsrho.org](mailto:info@nhsrho.org)**

Tender ref: RHO\_ED2024

Tenders must be received by end of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024. Tenders received after this date will not be considered.

It is incumbent on tenders to ensure they have all of the information required for the preparation of their tenders.

Further information about this tender can be obtained from: Arnie Puntis

Name	<b>Arnie Puntis</b>
Title	Research and Policy Manager
Email address	<a href="mailto:tenderbids@nhsrho.org">tenderbids@nhsrho.org</a>

## **Guidance in answering the equality questionnaire.**

When completing the questionnaire, all companies must answer each question fully and supply any documentary evidence requested. Failure to fully answer each question or failure to submit any documentary evidence required may lead the NHS Confederation to consider the answer unsatisfactory.

### **Question 1 and 2**

If your firm has implemented an effective equality policy, you will be able to answer yes to these questions. You will be able to confirm your answers by submitting your equality policy and supporting evidence as for as part of this section.

### **Question 3 and 4**

You will need to submit a copy of your firm's equality policy. You will need to ensure that your policy covers:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal
- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment
- Identifies the senior position responsibly for the policy

### **Question 5**

Documents available and method of communication to staff. You will be required to submit examples of any documents, which explain your firm's policies in respect of recruitment, selection, remuneration, training and promotion outside of the equality policy asked for in Question 3 and 4.

You will also need evidence of how your firm has communicated this document to staff i.e. notice boards or issue individual employees with a copy. There is no prescribed evidence here. You will need to submit whatever documents your firm uses for these purposes.

In recruitment advertisements or other literature, you will need to submit evidence that makes public your firm's commitment to equality in employment and service delivery.

Small firms may not have detailed procedures, but you must ensure that evidence is provided which demonstrates that personnel operate in accordance with a written equality policy that includes:

- Open recruitment practices such as using job centres and local newspapers to advertise vacancies
- Instructions about how the firm ensures that all job applicants are treated fairly.

In material promoting your services This relates to how your firm provides information in materials promoting your services e.g. in different languages, making information accessible to people with hearing and visual impairment and physical access for disabled users.

**Question 6**

This question's concern is whether any court or industrial tribunal has found your firm guilty of unlawful discrimination in the last three years. It is important to be honest with your answers. The NHS Confederation may check your responses. If the answer is yes, you may wish to insert additional information which details the actions your firm has undertaken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

Answering yes will not automatically mean that you do not get the contract; you need to ensure that the NHS Confederation feels confident that you have sufficient measures put in place to prevent a re-occurrence.

**Question 7**

This question's concern is whether your firm has ever had a contract terminated for noncompliance with equality legislation or equality contract conditions. If the answer is yes, your firm may wish to submit additional information which details the actions they have taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

**Question 8**

This question asks whether your firm has had any investigation carried out, whatever the outcome. The NHS Confederation can check a contractor's answer from lists that the CRE and EOC produce, so please be honest. The NHS Confederation is aware that because a firm has been investigated does not mean that it is guilty of discrimination. The result of the investigation will be taken into account when assessing your firm's answers to the questionnaire.

**Question 9**

If your firm has been found guilty of unlawful discrimination, you will need to provide evidence that details the steps your firm has taken to correct the situation. The Court, Industrial Tribunal or CRE will have made recommendations about steps your firm should take to eliminate the discrimination. If no action or inadequate action has been taken in this respect, only then will your firm be considered refusal onto the tender list.

**Question 10**

If your firm is not subject to UK employment law, you must ensure that you supply details of equivalent legislation that you adhere to.

## Schedule 1- Equalities questionnaire

This questionnaire must be completed satisfactorily in order for any company to be considered to tender for this NHS Confederation contract. In most cases, references to legislation below refer to the Equality Act 2010.

1. Is it your policy as an employer and as a service provider to comply with your statutory obligations under the equality legislation, which applies to Great Britain, or equivalent legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff?

Yes                      No

2. Accordingly, is it your practice not to discriminate directly or indirectly in breach of equality legislation which applies in Great Britain and legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff:

- In relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer and promote employees?

Yes                      No

- In relation to delivering services?

Yes                      No

3. Do you have a written equality policy?

Yes                      No

4. Does your equality policy cover:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal?

Yes                      No

- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment making it clear that these are disciplinary offences?

Yes                      No

- Identify the senior position for responsibility for the policy and its effective implementation?

Yes                      No

5. Is your policy on equality set out:

- In documents available and communicated to employees, managers, recognised trade unions or other representative groups?

Yes                  No

- In recruitment advertisements or other literature?

Yes                  No

- In materials promoting your services?

Yes                  No

Please evidence all questions.

If you answered NO to any part of questions 4 or 5 can you provide (and if so, please do) other evidence to show how you promote equalities in employment and service delivery.

6. In the last three years, have any findings of unlawful discrimination been made against your firm by the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal or any other court or in comparable proceedings in any other jurisdiction?

Yes                  No

7. In the last three years, has any contract with your organisation been terminated on grounds of your failure to comply with:

- Legislation prohibiting discrimination; or

Yes                  No

- Contract conditions relating to equality in the provision of services

Yes                  No

8. In the last three years, has your firm been the subject of formal investigations by the Equality and Human Rights Commission or a comparable body, on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination?

Yes

No

9. If the answer to question 6 and 7 is YES, or, in relation to question 8, a finding adverse to your organisation has been made, what steps have you taken as a result of that finding? Please summarise the details below and provide full details as an attachment.

10. If you are not currently subject to UK employment law, please supply details of your experience in complying with equivalent legislation that is designed to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. List any attached documents.