

Plain language version

BRACE Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy 2025-2028

The BRACE team brings together people from the University of Birmingham, RAND Europe, THIS Labs, THIS Institute and National Voices. We study new ideas in health and social care to find out what works well and how these ideas affect different people and communities. Our goal is to make health and care services better, and fairer and more equal for everyone.

Why this matters

Not everyone has the same access to good healthcare. Some people face unfair barriers because of where they live, their background, or other personal factors. BRACE wants to help change this by making sure our research includes many different voices. We also want to try to look closely at how new services affect different groups of people.

How BRACE is organised

BRACE is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). We have several groups that guide our work:

- **A Steering Group** of 18 people who help monitor that BRACE's work is fair, independent, and well-run.
- **Three Rapid Advisory Panels**, one for patients and the public, one for researchers, and one for health and care leaders. They give advice to the BRACE team based on their expertise.
- **An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy Group** of 10 experts who make sure that fairness and inclusion are built into everything BRACE does.

This structure helps BRACE bring together people with many experiences to design and share research that is more inclusive and useful.

Our values and principles

BRACE believes in fairness, justice, collaboration and innovation.

We aim to:

- create a welcoming and safe environment for everyone we work with,
- listen to people's experiences and ideas,
- be open about how we work, and
- keep learning and improving.

We want all team members and partners to feel respected and able to contribute fully.

Our three main goals

1. Show real commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

We want to keep learning about ways to make BRACE and our research more inclusive.

To do this, we will:

- invite people to share their experiences of working with BRACE,
- review how we do research and what we could do better,
- discuss and reflect on our progress regularly, and
- share what we learn with others in health and care research.

2. Build an inclusive environment for everyone in BRACE and our networks

We aim to make BRACE a place where everyone feels valued and supported.

To do this, we will:

- make sure all team members know about the action plans in their organisation that support equality and inclusion,
- provide training on topics like discrimination, unconscious bias, cultural awareness and inclusive research methods,
- support professional growth and leadership for all team members, including patients and public advisors,
- review how we work and discuss this with the wider BRACE team,
- learn from other NIHR centres doing similar work, and
- do this with support from the leadership team at BRACE and with the BRACE EDI lead as a point of contact.

This means people can share ideas safely, learn from one another, and help make BRACE better for everyone.

3. Tackle inequalities in health and care through our research

In our studies, we try to find out how new health and care services affect different groups. We think about this when we decide what questions to answer, what evidence to collect, and what lessons to share with others.

We will:

- include people from a wide range of communities in our studies,
- remove barriers to taking part in research (for example by using interpreters),
- find out, if possible, whether new services help or harm certain groups,
- include evidence from different groups in our research reports to show how new services might impact fairness, and
- keep improving our approach based on what we learn.

By doing this, we try to help decision-makers design health and care services that meet everyone's needs more fairly.

Continuous learning

We believe that EDI is not a one-time task. BRACE will keep reviewing its work and sharing lessons with others interested in rapid evaluation research. We will talk openly about what works and what is difficult, so that the whole research community may improve together.

For more information, please contact the BRACE EDI lead:

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