



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement of Intent 2025 - 26

Theme: Pain

1. Commitment to EDI Principles

The Pain Theme is committed to inclusive leadership and research practices that reflect the diversity of people living with chronic pain. We aim to embed a culture of equity, accountability, and transparency across our research and team structures. Our values framework, developed through research culture cafés, promotes responsible leadership and balances team science with individual creativity and autonomy.

2. Our challenges and priorities for EDI in research culture and our workforce

We recognise that inclusivity must be measured and supported throughout the research lifecycle. Our challenge is to ensure that all individuals—regardless of background—are supported and valued in our teams, and that our leadership reflects these principles.

2.1 Key achievements for EDI in research culture and workforce

- Developed a theme values framework based on facilitated research culture cafés, embedding principles of responsible leadership.
- Piloted a network analysis tool to measure inclusivity in researcher interactions, with plans to roll out across the department.
- Committed to inclusive hiring practices and supporting individuals at every level of the theme.
- Balanced team incentives with individual autonomy and professional development.

2.2 Objectives and ongoing plans for EDI in research culture and workforce

- Roll out the inclusivity measurement tool across the department to formally assess and demonstrate equitable collaboration.
- Continue supporting autonomy and creativity while maintaining inclusive team structures.
- Promote professional development opportunities tailored to individual needs and backgrounds.



- Ensure that leadership and team-building practices reflect the values of equity and inclusion.

3. Our challenges and priorities for inclusive research practices and PPIEP

Pain research has historically failed to capture the voices of disadvantaged populations. Our challenge is to redesign research methodologies to be inclusive of neurodiverse individuals, those with mental health challenges, disabilities, and people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

3.1 Key achievements for inclusive research practices and PPIEP

- Launched the **Inclusive Labs Project** to redesign experimental frameworks for accessibility and inclusivity across a wide range of dimensions.
- Developed the **Living with Pain** project, a PPI engagement initiative led by a skilled artist, exploring how environment shapes pain experiences.
- Engaged people from minority and low socio-economic backgrounds to understand their lived experiences of pain and access to care.
- Identified systemic discrimination in healthcare delivery and chronic pain research through PPI activities.

3.2 Objectives and ongoing plans for inclusive research practices and PPIEP

- Continue refining the Inclusive Labs Project to embed inclusivity into all aspects of research design and implementation and publish the outcome.
- Use insights from the Living with Pain project to inform future research priorities and methodologies and publish this as a virtual exhibition.
- Develop inclusive communication strategies to ensure research outcomes are accessible and relevant to all, with a particular focus on people with autism and neurodiversity.
- Build long-term partnerships with different groups affected by chronic pain to co-design interventions and shape future research directions, and build this into new projects going forward, including in neurotechnology development.