

Patient and Public Involvement Focus

Welcome to our PPI newsletter!

Welcome to our winter issue of the King's Clinical Research Facility (CRF) Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) newsletter.

In this newsletter, we will continue to keep you updated on our work, which includes working towards our goals in both our PPI and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategies. In recent months, we presented our school outreach work at a national conference, published our EDI work, attended the Nursing Times Awards, and continued expanding our staff EDI training. You can find more details on these updates in this issue.

Thank you for the ideas and energy you have contributed throughout the past year. Working alongside you continues to inspire us, help us grow, and strengthen the way we work at the CRF. We wish you a happy New Year and look forward to all that we will achieve together in 2026!

The Public Involvement Team, on behalf of the King's CRF

In this issue:

Spotlight on our studies: – Page 1

Meet the team at King's CRF and February awareness events – Page 2

UK Clinical Research Facility Network conference and school outreach –

Page 3

Nursing Times Awards – Page 4

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Staff Training – Page 4

EDI publication and PPI strategy – Page 5

Spotlight on our studies

At King's CRF, we're supporting a study exploring how caffeine influences brain activity. Although caffeine is widely used, we still don't fully understand how it works in the brain, especially its effects on the adenosine system, which helps regulate alertness, movement and cognition.

Using advanced MRI scanning, researchers are examining how a single dose of caffeine changes brain blood flow and oxygen use. The findings may help improve understanding of brain systems that are of interest in neurological and psychiatric research.



Georgie, PPI member and study participant, shared their experience of the inclusive, personalised care they received during the trial:

"I'm the first non-binary participant at the facility. Everyone was considerate about this and seemed to understand and not be confused by that concept. I remember one doctor apologised about the 'male/female' question on the forms and said they need updating, but there was also an option to put down gender identity too. Another staff member also apologised to me later for using the wrong pronouns earlier, which I appreciated."

Meet the team at King's CRF!

Each newsletter we will introduce you to some members of the King's CRF staff, and some members of our PPI group. We hope you enjoy getting to know a little bit more about these individuals and why they enjoy their roles.

Flora – PPI Lead, Tatenda – Clinical Research Practitioner



Flora joined us in December as our new PPI Lead. She has a background in Health Psychology and previously worked for a charity focused on substance misuse and mental health, where she was Co-production Lead, working closely with service users to improve services. Flora will be leading the refresh of our PPI strategy and is excited to start working with our PPI members.

Tatenda is a dedicated Clinical Research Practitioner with a Biomedical Sciences background. She works directly with patients in the CRF, where she sees the real impact of research and enjoys that no two days are the same. Tatenda is also an active member of the PPI outreach working group and enjoyed delivering science outreach workshops to secondary school students.



Nathan and Chris – PPI members



We're pleased to recognise **Nathan**, an active member of the King's CRF PPI community. With several years' experience in PPI, he is committed to making research relevant, accessible and good value for the public, with a strong focus on EDI. Through the CRF, Nathan recently reviewed the patient information materials for a study on Blastic Plasmacytoid Dendritic Cell Neoplasm, a rare type of blood cancer, helping to make them easier to understand. His thoughtful input continues to support patient-centred research at King's.

We would like to welcome **Chris** who has recently joined the CRF PPI community. Following his diagnosis of chronic kidney disease and participation in a drug research trial, he became involved in PPI across different groups within King's Health Partners, finding it an engaging opportunity to meet people from various disciplines and share a patient viewpoint. With a background in the social sector and NHS, he brings rich professional and lived experience. He is looking forward to getting more involved in our PPI projects.



February awareness events

World Cancer Day 04/02

World Cancer Day raises awareness about cancer worldwide, encouraging people to learn more about early detection, support those affected, and recognise the importance of people-centred care under this year's theme, *"United by Unique."*

[Read more Here](#)

Time to Talk Day 05/02

Time to Talk Day, a UK-led initiative, encourages everyone to open up about mental health and helps break stigma through simple, everyday conversations that make it easier for people to reach out and feel supported.

[Read more Here](#)

Rare Disease Day 28/02

Rare Disease Day raises awareness of the 300 million people living with a rare condition, encouraging understanding, early diagnosis, and better support.

[Read more Here](#)

UK Clinical Research Facility Network conference - Poster Win for “Breaking Down the Barriers”

In July, at the joint UKCRF/BRC Conference in Birmingham, our team was thrilled to receive the **Best Poster Prize in the Breaking Down the Barriers category** for our school outreach project. The winning poster showcased our community engagement work with a local all-girls' school, where we delivered a dynamic five-hour workshop introducing students to clinical research through interactive talks, quizzes, and a hands-on activity designing their own clinical trial. Thirty Year 7 students took part, with 70% rating the day as “good” or “very good,” and 69% saying they left knowing “a lot” more about research. This recognition highlights how meaningful school engagement can spark curiosity, build confidence, and help break down barriers to participation in research careers, particularly for young people who may not have previously seen themselves represented in these fields.

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Next steps: Student Feedback Panel

To continue improving our outreach work, we will be inviting a group of students in March to share their thoughts on the workshop and help us understand what would make future sessions even more engaging and relevant. Their insights will guide us as we refine the activities and develop new elements that resonate with young people.

Later in the year, we plan to deliver our next workshop at the school, with the longer-term aim of expanding the programme to other local schools. This will allow us to reach more students, build stronger connections in the community, and ensure our outreach continues to grow in meaningful and inclusive ways.

Special thank you to the public members involved in this project, Savia and Manos, to the staff who delivered the workshop on the day and the staff involved in creating the research poster!

**Community Engagement:
Joining forces with schools to make research fun!**

Why engage with schools?

Community engagement is an important part of King's Clinical Research Facility (CRF) Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategies. Working with schools is a good way to establish ourselves in the local community, whilst raising the profile of research and promoting different career opportunities to students. We have focused on an all-girls school to encourage engagement with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM), which is typically male-dominated.

What did the students think?

30 Year 7 students attended and all completed evaluation forms.

70% rated the day as ‘very good’ or ‘good’
69% now know ‘a lot’ about research

Designing a mini clinical trial activity was very popular. The students tried to answer the question, ‘Does eating broccoli make you more intelligent?’

I loved learning about all the medicines and cures and how detailed and important science really is. I loved the project, the outcome, and how lovely everyone presenting is (Year 7 Student)

What did the teachers think?

The students enjoyed their time with the CRF team, and they had an opportunity to work on their own research idea and deliver a presentation. The skills they learned will be useful in their futures. It's been such an inspiring workshop, and I hope that more students all over the country have a chance to take part in it (Careers Counsellor)

What did we learn for next time?



The colourful winning poster! Made by the Next-Gen Researchers team, a group of Year 7 students

Some photos from our day!



To find out more about our PPI and EDI work, visit our website: <https://www.maudsleybrc.nihr.ac.uk/crf-home/>

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Nursing Times Awards 2025 Nomination

The Clinical Research Facility (CRF) was nominated at the Nursing Times Awards 2025 for the *Dame Elizabeth Anionwu Award for Inclusivity in Nursing and Midwifery*. Organised by *Nursing Times* magazine, the awards recognise excellence across the nursing profession and celebrate work that makes a meaningful difference to patient care, service delivery and inclusivity. Our nomination reflects the CRF's strong commitment to EDI and inclusive practice across the department.

"Being nominated in the EDI category for the Nursing Times Awards is such an honour as it is a core value in the CRF, and this recognition reflects the collective commitment of my colleagues and the communities we serve," said Ade, our Study Manager.

From left to right: our CRF staff, Eden, Cat, Ade, Dani and Tatenda



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion staff training

We completed our four-part EDI staff training programme within the CRF. This work is now part of a wider Quality Improvement project led by Dani, our Lead Nurse, through his Florence Nightingale Foundation scholarship.

As part of this project, the training is being rolled out across all nine Research Delivery Units (RDUs) at King's College Hospital. This has now begun with the **Cultural Intelligence module**, which received very positive feedback from staff, and this training will continue to support a more inclusive and understanding research environment.



EDI Publication

A huge highlight for us this year was the publication of our EDI paper in October, *“Steps to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion principles into research settings”*, which shares the work we have been doing at the CRF to co-design our EDI training with staff and Patient and Public Involvement members.

Soon after the paper was published, we presented this work at the **National BRC and CRF EDI Leads Meeting in Sheffield** in October, where we gave a talk called *Inclusive Research: co-designing change at King's CRF*.

RESEARCH Open Access 

Steps to embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion principles into research settings

Catherine Harvey¹, Safiya Hassan¹, Peter Bampton² and Danilo Nebres¹

Abstract

Background Embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles within the NHS and its research infrastructure is vital to foster inclusive and respectful environments and teams. We focus on the importance of delivering tailored and in-person staff training on pertinent EDI topics for this, as it promotes team building, social understanding, and collaboration. This approach was undertaken with meaningful and sustained input from Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) members who formed part of an EDI working group to advise on the content and delivery of each training session.

This paper explores the implementation of staff training sessions and EDI working group meetings, termed the 'EDI initiative' at King's Clinical Research Facility (CRF). We concentrate on co-production methods in collaboration with PPI members.

Methods The initiative included a survey with quantitative and qualitative questions assessing staff knowledge and confidence in EDI topics, the formation of an EDI working group, and co-designed training sessions addressing priority areas identified in the survey. A follow-up mixed-methods survey, distributed 12 months after the implementation of the initiative, measured the impact of each session.

Results Responses to the initial survey identified four key training priorities: (i) Raising Concerns Comfortably, (ii) Cultural Intelligence, (iii) Trans* Awareness and Unconscious Bias, and (iv) Health Inequalities. Training sessions were conducted over nine months, with a follow-up survey revealing increased confidence in raising concerns (95%) and improved cultural awareness (95.3%). However, some participants reported challenges in applying their knowledge, highlighting the need for ongoing reinforcement.

Conclusion This initiative demonstrates the value of co-produced EDI training in research settings. Findings emphasise the importance of interactive learning, reflection, and sustained engagement in fostering inclusive research environments.

Keywords Equality, Diversity, And Inclusion, Patient and Public Involvement, Staff Training, Surveys

Plain English summary

King's Clinical Research Facility (CRF) is located in King's College Hospital (KCH) in London, and its purpose is to support clinical trials on topics like mental health and general medicine. Recently, the CRF has focused on delivering staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training to increase confidence and knowledge. EDI is about making sure that there are equal opportunities for everyone, no matter their social or personal background. This is important as studies have shown that certain groups, who are often treated negatively, are less likely to take part in research.

Thank you to the public members and staff who co-authored this paper: Cat, Dani, Safiya, Peter.

Reflecting on the event, Dani said: *“Presenting our work at the conference was a real highlight. Hearing from so many different groups was incredibly inspiring, and it reinforced the importance of continuing to develop and champion EDI work across our research community.”*

You can read our study here:

[Published paper](#)

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X (formerly known as Twitter): @King's CRF

The King's CRF website is currently undergoing some maintenance.

Have a virtual tour of our facilities:

<https://www.maudsleybrc.nihr.ac.uk/nihr-kings-clinical-research-facility/about-crf/>

If you would like to receive this newsletter in a different format, please let us know.