

## Addressing under-representation and active participation in UKPRP research.

The vision of the UK Prevention Research Partnership (UKPRP) is to improve population health and reduce health inequalities through the primary prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Addressing under-representation and active participation in research is vital to achieving this vision.

UKPRP funders are committed to making research open and accessible to diverse individuals and communities and removing any barriers they may face<sup>1</sup>. We endorse this commitment and support this work by taking the following actions:

### 1. Providing funding to address inequalities

UKPRP was established in 2017 to increase investment in prevention research in the UK.

UKPRP is investing in research projects that are developing interventions to reduce inequalities in health at different life course stages. For example, health inequalities can manifest by socio-economic background, deprivation, ethnicity, sex and gender, but this is a non-exhaustive list, and health inequalities exist between many other groups and protected characteristics.

Applicants to our two calls were strongly encouraged to use systems thinking and, where appropriate, systems science when developing and evaluating interventions to prevent NCDs and reduce health inequalities. This wider perspective should inform the evaluation of interventions for tackling complex population health challenges, including dealing with changes that occur within a system in response to interventions.

### 2. Inclusive research design and user involvement

UKPRP-funded research is co-produced with users such as local and national government, civil society groups, health professionals, industry (where appropriate), and the public. UKPRP supports inclusive research design and control for, recruitment from, and analysis of applicability to population sub-groups (especially previously under-served groups) as appropriate. Applicants were strongly encouraged to adopt co-production in developing their research proposals, and the UKPRP Expert Review Group was briefed to evaluate this when assessing the applications. The co-production element is evaluated as part of the monitoring and evaluation of individual projects and the initiative as a whole.

### 3. Adding weight to our terms and conditions for award-holding institutions

We remind our award holders that we expect them to consider and support equality, diversity and inclusion, including but not limited to their duties as part of the Equality Act 2010<sup>2</sup> and Northern Ireland equality legislation<sup>3</sup>. We want to ensure that equality and diversity are not after-thoughts but are considered central to delivering excellent research and innovation that includes everyone and benefits everyone within society.

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<sup>1</sup> [British Heart Foundation](#); [Cancer Research UK](#); [NIHR](#), [Public Health Agency NI](#), [The Health Foundation](#), [UKRI](#), [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#); [Wellcome](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ECNI - The Law, Equality Legislation, Equality Commission, Northern Ireland \(equalityni.org\)](#)

#### 4. Our expert review and assessment practices

For any future UKPRP funding calls, we will update the expert review and assessment practices, drawing on lessons learnt from testing and piloting different assessment procedures across our funders. We will continue to challenge ourselves to remove bias in the system and to support the expert assessment that recognises a diversity of promising ideas and knowledge generation and drives fairness and creativity in the process. Key to this work is a renewed effort to bring a wider range of people from across the sector into our expert review process, and we will continue to push for greater representation from across the research and innovation system. Measures available to us include monitoring the diversity of our panels and educating panel members on bias awareness.

#### 5. Introducing a standardised narrative CV format for our grant applications

For future UKPRP funding calls, we will utilise the standardised narrative CV format for our grant applications as employed by UKRI and supported by other UKPRP funders. This approach allows applicants to evidence their contributions in a wider range of ways, supporting and valuing diversity. We do not want to perpetuate narrow criteria or re-inscribe assumptions about career patterns or contributions to society. We want to do more than just invite everyone who has a great idea or product into the research and innovation system. We want to go further and remove any blockages or barriers to their participation.

