

Health Equity Research Advocates Network **Role Description**

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair, and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. For instance, in the North of England, individuals can expect to live at least one year less than the national average and spend a greater portion of their lives in poor health.

To support a reduction in health inequalities across local populations, we must pay close attention to health equity and consistently apply this lens to our work. Health equity is achieved when everyone is able to attain their full potential for health and wellbeing. Whilst Equality means giving everyone the same, or equal, opportunities, Equity means tailoring the way we work to ensure that everyone can enjoy the same outcome.

This Network has been created to achieve exactly that—uniting like-minded individuals from diverse professional backgrounds to share best practice, expand knowledge, and brainstorm innovative ideas for achieving health equity in our work, all within a safe and productive environment. Current member organisations include:

- Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Alder Hey Children's Hospital

It is an exciting time to join the Network, with it being still in its infancy. By joining, you will have an opportunity to influence how it is shaped for future Advocates, based on your insights and what you feel you would like to glean from it.

Anyone can become an Advocate. This includes academics, (allied) health care professionals, and public health officers. Depending on their role, Advocates may strive to effect change at multiple levels across their organisation.

We are aiming to grow our Network by inviting representatives from various organisations across the North West Coast to join us. This expansion will take place gradually and in phases, with each phase incorporating insights from the previous one, fostering a continuously evolving Network grounded in shared learning and collaboration.

Role Overview: As a Health Equity Research Advocate (HERA), you will play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of equity and inclusion within your organisation and encouraging and enabling the use of research and evidence effectively to address those health inequalities local to you.

As a HERA, you will be involved in supporting and developing your colleagues' understanding of health equity, the importance of research evidence in targeting inequalities, and the principles and importance of applying equity-sensitive research to decision-making. You will also engage in networking, sharing resources, and identifying barriers to promote positive change.

Some of your key responsibilities may include:

- **Awareness and Understanding:**
 - Supporting and developing colleagues' awareness and understanding of health equity and inequalities.
 - Enhancing colleagues' awareness and understanding of the role of research evidence in targeting inequalities.
 - Fostering colleagues' awareness and understanding of equity-sensitive research practices.
- **Networking and Collaboration:**
 - Networking with other organisations across the region to share learning and resources.
 - Signposting colleagues to relevant resources and contacts as appropriate.
- **Promote Change:**
 - Identifying barriers to achieving health equity within your organisation and the wider community.
 - Advocating for and promoting changes to address these barriers.

What can you expect from the Network?

As a HERA, your role is voluntary and designed to complement your day-to-day job. While there is no financial compensation, you will be exposed to a wide range of professional development opportunities through taking part in tailored learning sessions and regular interactions with other HERAs across the North West Coast region.

To join, your manager must approve your participation and allocate sufficient time for you to engage meaningfully with the Network.

What does the Network expect from you?

In this role, you will actively drive change within your organisation by promoting equity, advocating for resources, and ensuring engagement in equity-sensitive, applied health research.

To maximise your impact, you are expected to:

- Participate actively in the Network by attending monthly online catchups and ad hoc learning sessions.
- Share your views, experiences, and reflections with colleagues.

A key initial task is attending the mandatory FORE workshop. By joining the Network, you are agreeing to prioritise this commitment.

Who might find this Network appealing?

- Individuals keen on learning more and sharing insights with colleagues across the North West
- Those open to participating in discussions and brainstorming ideas on how to progress equity at various levels
- People at any stage of their career, regardless of their level of expertise in equity or involvement in research

It is intended that new members will be added to the Network approximately every 6 months. However, the dates are subject to change and will be announced on the our webpages on the ARC NWC website: <https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/sub-groups/health-equity-champions/>