

Equality, diversity and inclusion in publicly-funded modern slavery research in the UK

Research Report

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Project led by the UK BME Anti-Slavery Network, part of AFRUCA Safeguarding Children.

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Research by:



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Headline findings and recommendations

This study assessed the state of play in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in modern slavery research. It explored EDI in the research workforce, in the research process and in funder policy and practices. We found:

- The modern slavery research community values EDI, but demands data on this community that is collected and analysed appropriately and meaningfully
- EDI is not considered enough throughout the research process or described comprehensively within research reports
- Collaborating with communities and people with lived experience is key to improving EDI funder policies and practice in modern slavery research.

Introduction and background

Modern slavery research is focused on addressing a stark social inequality. Modern slavery represents, or expresses, what social inequality looks like at its extreme. It also drives, and reproduces, further inequalities. Research in the field is oriented to developing insight that will address these inequalities.

The extent to which that ambition is realised is a work-in-progress as the field matures. Modern slavery research is relatively young. These two factors taken together – the broad equality-driven foundations of modern slavery research and its youth as a field – presents a distinct opportunity for it to be shaped in a way that is equal, diverse and inclusive *by design*. Indeed, the commissioning of this work is a manifestation of that ambition.

A more equal, diverse and inclusive modern slavery research landscape is also a necessary condition for its credibility and legitimacy among people its outputs are intended to serve including those who use it to inform policy and practice. The growth of meaningful engagement with people with lived experience in research is one indicator of this need being realised.

Concern about equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in research more generally is long-standing. In recent years, EDI has received greater profile in the strategies and actions of public funders (for example, UKRI) (Guyan & Oloyede, 2020), research institutions (e.g. universities) and among organisations that promote the interests of citizens and communities. In the modern slavery field, the strategies and action plans of the Black and Minority Ethnic Anti-Slavery Network (BASNET) (UK BME Anti-Slavery Network, 2021) and the Modern Slavery PEC (Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre, 2022) note persistent EDI gaps in how research is funded, approached, designed, conducted, and disseminated. This research report responds to these challenges by exploring if and how modern slavery research funded by UK public money addresses EDI across a broad range of activity, from how it is embedded in funding decisions to how participants

in research are enabled to take part. It is a stocktake of EDI in the field that can act as a baseline for future comparisons. It is also a look to our ambitions as a field; how we can improve our policies, practices, and orientations to make research more equal, diverse and inclusive. In doing so, we draw from emerging or good practice from other fields and attend to issues that may have been overlooked in modern slavery research to date.

BOX 1: Our approach to terminology

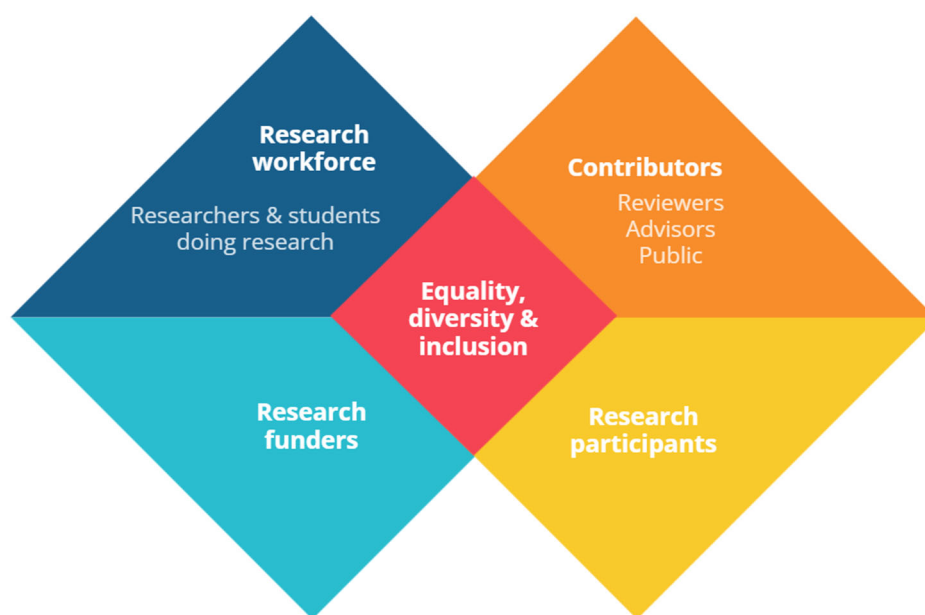
We recognise that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the terms used in relation to it are complex and contested. Language is important and we have been guided by the positions and terminology used by organisations seeking to make the UK and research more equal, diverse and inclusive. Important reference points include the [Wellcome Trust](#), the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) and the [NHS Race and Health Observatory](#). We have also been led by BASNET's previous work on race equality in the modern slavery sector (UK BME Anti-Slavery Network, 2021) and by the discussions of focus groups participants for this research. These discussions highlighted the importance of modern slavery research as a site of treating people with respect, fairness and dignity in a way that values difference, is authentic and offers opportunity for participation, especially for people with lived experience of modern slavery.

How we are approaching the problem

Equality, diversity and inclusion cuts across the different organisations, people and functions involved in research. Figure 1 represents the different stakeholders involved in research. They include the researcher workforce (people who conduct research in their professional roles or as students), the people and organisations that advise, guide and review research, the people and institutions that fund research and the people who are participants in research. These stakeholders have different interests in and power over what research can and should deliver and unequal influence in it. It is fundamental, then, that when we ask questions relating to EDI we recognise that power differentials and dynamics are at play.

There is a known trend of underrepresentation of people with diverse characteristics, for example, from minority ethnic backgrounds, in both the conduct of and participation in research (Gill & Redwood, 2013). In this report, we consider these issues in focus group discussions and in our analytical approach. As far as possible, we have weighted our analysis in favour of the reflections and experiences of those who, based on prior knowledge, are likely to be excluded in the systems and structures of research development, management and dissemination. Our recommendations also seek to address power imbalances within research systems so that the field is more clearly oriented to the people for whom research is intended to serve: people and communities most harmed by modern slavery and those who are at elevated risk of being exposed to it.

Figure 1 Equality, diversity and inclusion across the modern slavery research landscape



Aims of the study

To:

1. Generate new data and insights into EDI in modern slavery research in the UK, identifying key strengths, opportunities, gaps and challenges
2. Identify examples of emerging and promising practice in EDI
3. Outline a series of feasible and operational recommendations for the Modern Slavery PEC and other stakeholders to build and sustain an equal, diverse and inclusionary modern slavery research landscape.

How the report is structured

The report begins by outlining the methods employed in the study and their limitations. We then go on to describe the characteristics of the modern slavery research workforce, EDI in the research process (design, conduct and reporting) and funders' activities to address EDI challenges. The report concludes with examples of emerging and promising practice, a discussion of the findings and some recommendations.

Methods

Study design

The study was designed as four streams of data collection and collation. We drew from both primary and secondary sources.

- 1. Collection, collation and analysis of existing and new data on the EDI characteristics of the research workforce.** This arm of the study included bringing together aggregated data from two existing data sources and building new data from a bespoke survey. The two existing data sources were: i) EDI monitoring data from UKRI funded studies with a modern slavery/human trafficking focus. This dataset included 86 awarded grants with end dates between 2007-2027. Diversity data of Principal Investigators/co-Principal Investigators (n=87), co-Investigators (n=234) and Fellows (n=7) were collated. ii) EDI monitoring data collected by the Modern Slavery PEC from people who had applied for research funding from September 2021 to June 2022. Modern Slavery PEC diversity data included the responses of 92 funding applicants. To supplement these existing datasets, the project undertook a survey. This allowed us to expand on the range of diversity characteristics captured, include research funded by other public funders and enabled the inclusion of questions on training, experiences of discrimination and what the field's EDI priorities should be. The survey was distributed to the modern slavery research workforce across the UK and beyond via sector newsletters (e.g. BASNET and the Human Trafficking Foundation), researcher networks (e.g. the Modern Slavery PEC's funded researchers, senior management board and newsletter recipients) and via social media (e.g. Twitter, Slack, LinkedIn). The survey was conducted between January-March 2023 and included 93 respondents.
- 2. Focus groups with people with lived experience of modern slavery, community organisations, researchers and funders.** These were designed to elicit deeper insight into the challenges faced and opportunities for EDI in the research sector. Focus groups were held on-line between December 2022-March 2023 and included discussions about understandings of EDI, particular strengths and weaknesses in EDI in modern slavery research, missing elements and directions for the future. Five discussions were held throughout the project, with the final group acting as a validation exercise for the presentation of the final project.

In total, 23 people participated in the focus groups. This included five people with lived experience of trafficking/exploitation, five people from community organisations working with affected people, eight researchers with experience of working in the modern slavery field and five participants from research funding organisations. Eleven people from across the four focus groups took part in the validation exercise.

- 3. Audit/documentary analysis of Modern Slavery PEC studies.** This element of the project examined elements of the design, conduct and reporting of EDI among Modern Slavery PEC funded research projects until September 2022. This enabled us to explore EDI in researcher practice, highlight areas of strength and make recommendations for improvement. In total, 22 research reports were analysed (see Appendix 3 for the full list).
- 4. Documentary analysis of funder strategies, action plans and activities.** This included an on-line search of activity aimed at improving EDI among research funding organisations. Funders with a history of supporting modern slavery research were selected alongside those that met three criteria: i) being a public

or charity funder of research, ii) had documented EDI material online, iii) operated in the UK. We also explored the EDI strategies and activities of the institutions that form the Modern Slavery PEC (the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, the Rights Lab, the Wilberforce Institute, the Centre for the Study of International Slavery, the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and The Alan Turing Institute). This exercise allowed us to identify areas of emergent practice and demonstrative case studies. In total, the EDI strategies, action plans and activities of 17 research funders were explored (see Appendix 4 for a full list).

Further details of the methodology and methods of the study are available as appendices. These include:

- Appendix 1: A copy of survey questions
- Appendix 2: Search/inclusion criteria for UKRI studies. These criteria determined the selection of studies included in a dataset for analysis of diversity monitoring data
- Appendix 3: A list of research projects included in the audit of Modern Slavery PEC funded studies
- Appendix 4: A list of funding organisations and academic institutions included in the documentary analysis

Limitations of the study

While the study is the first of its kind in the modern slavery field and provides insightful overview of EDI, it also is limited in its depth, breadth and methods:

- Scope limitations: The study is limited to UK publicly-funded modern slavery research. As a global problem, with an international researcher base, the study is likely to have excluded a large number of researchers and studies that have been funded from elsewhere.
- Data quality and comprehensiveness: The arm of the research concerned with exploring the research workforce is limited by several factors. The UKRI and the Modern Slavery PEC datasets, for example, may include some double counting. The anonymous nature of diversity monitoring, however, means we were unable to exclude repeat records. There was also likely duplication between the survey conducted for this research and the Modern Slavery PEC monitoring data and UKRI dataset. Also, the Modern Slavery PEC diversity monitoring form was voluntary and so incomplete. We were unable to calculate rates of completion owing to the way the diversity form was distributed and uncertainty about the denominator. In addition, UKRI diversity data included only four diversity characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, disability) and records of, for example, ethnicity were aggregated into categories such as 'Black and minority ethnic' which, despite large sample sizes, meant the granularity of analysis was limited. Further limitations to the quantitative analysis related to the need for the study to adhere to HESA reporting standards meaning, for example, that sample sizes of less than 2.5 could not be reported and that rounding was necessary to the nearest five respondents.
- Access to information: Aside from the researcher workforce data, the project team had challenges accessing EDI documentation of some funders.
- Resources: as a responsive research project, the time available to the research team was limited to meet commissioning demands.
- Access to participants and monitoring diversity: Accessing a broad range of stakeholders for focus group discussions was challenging in the time available to the team, despite being well-placed within the anti-slavery sector. We distributed a diversity form to participants but received very low returns,

underscoring the challenges research faces in establishing better data in this field.

- Reporting ethnicity: Sample sizes in the survey and Modern Slavery PEC monitoring data were generally too small to report ethnicity at a disaggregated level. UKRI data sources reported only in aggregate categories such as 'White' and 'Black and Minority Ethnic'.

The role of the project advisory group

We recruited a small project advisory group to guide the project. This was drawn from BASNET's Research Advisory Panel and included an academic advisor and a someone with lived experience of exploitation/trafficking. The five members met with the research team twice during the duration of the study (October 2022 and March 2023). The panel's role was to guide and critically assess the work packages. Our discussions included our approach to data collection and topics for inclusion in focus groups.

Ethics approval was attained through the University of Nottingham's School of Health Sciences research ethics committee (reference number FMHS 148-1022)

Findings

The findings of the study are arranged into three parts. First, we explore data on the diversity of the modern slavery research workforce. We do this primarily through the analysis of UKRI and Modern Slavery PEC diversity data and the project's survey data. We supplement this with insight from focus group data on the structural, institutional and researcher-level issues (e.g. skills and training) that enable or constrain improved EDI. Second, we examine EDI in the research process, including research design, participation and reporting. This is informed by analysis of Modern Slavery PEC research reports and focus group data. Finally, we present analysis of EDI in funder policy and practices using data from funders' stated EDI policies and actions and from focus group discussions.

EDI in the research workforce

Focus group discussion, especially discussions among funders and researchers themselves, highlighted the need to attend to EDI more explicitly as a workforce issue. One researcher commented:

EDI in the sector [should cut] across all areas but it should be very intentional and very strategic. So it shouldn't be 'let's turn up to a meeting, what colour of the face is on the screen? Great, let's crack on'. This [research project] should be much wiser than that (Researcher participant 2).

This desire for a sophisticated approach to EDI related to other themes of discussion including the need to capture more and better routine data on who constitutes the researcher workforce (see Recommendation 2.4), ensuring diverse teams are constructed to undertake research projects (and the challenges of doing that) and the need to consider how advantages and disadvantages intersect to amplify the success of some in the workforce over others.

With these issues in mind, diversity data drawn here from three quantitative data sources (UKRI/Modern Slavery PEC and project survey data) offers new and helpful insight into the state of EDI in the modern slavery research workforce over the past 15 years in the UK. We found some similarities and differences in the profile of the modern slavery research workforce in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Survey data presented a richer picture of diversity among the workforce across a range of characteristics. It also identified some of the challenges the workforce faced in terms of experiences of discrimination in their roles and what sort of support people working in the sector wanted for improved EDI.

Age, gender, ethnicity and disability

The age profile of the modern slavery research workforce was reasonably consistent across funder datasets. Forty-nine per cent of applicants were aged 49 or under in the Modern Slavery PEC data and 45 per cent of awardees were aged 45 or under in the UKRI dataset. By contrast, 64 per cent of survey respondents were aged 44 or under in the survey data.

Differences might be explained by the relative openness of the survey criteria compared to the other data sets (e.g., open to people advising or administering research) and because respondents did not have to be a grant applicant/recipient to take part.

Reflecting this, 30 survey respondents (32 per cent) identified as an early career researcher. See Table 1 for a summary of survey data.

Around three quarters of the survey respondents identified as a woman. This was mirrored in the UKRI (61 per cent 'female') and Modern Slavery PEC data (72 per cent 'female'). The survey did not capture sufficient responses to report on the number of people who identified as transgender (see limitations on HESA reporting above).

Relating to ethnicity and at the aggregate level, 75 per cent of people in the UKRI dataset identified in the 'White' category; 71 per cent of Modern Slavery PEC grant applicants identified in 'White British' or 'White Other' categories; and 71 per cent of the survey respondents identified in the 'White' category. Broad ethnic minority data are not disclosable from Modern Slavery PEC applicant data owing to small sample sizes. However, UKRI data identify that 11 per cent of awardees identified in the 'Asian' category and five per cent in the 'Black' category. In the survey, five people out of 93 survey responses identified as Asian / Asian British and 10 with Black / African / Caribbean / Black British backgrounds. Ten survey participants identified in 'other' ethnic groups. In terms of leadership, analysis of the survey data revealed that 15 out of 40 principal/lead researchers identified with an ethnic minority background. As a comparator, in 2019-20, between 12-17 per cent of all UKRI principal investigator and fellow awardees were from ethnic minority backgrounds (UKRI, 2021). While these findings are only a snapshot, they offer some insight and promise, demonstrating that there is some diversity among the modern slavery workforce that requires further monitoring and exploration in future research.

Table 1 Characteristics of survey participants

Characteristic	Aggregated count	%
Age		
18-24	suppressed	-
25-34	30	32
35-44	30	32
45-54	20	-
55-64	15	-
65-74	suppressed	-
75+	suppressed	-
Total aggregated sample	95	-
Gender		
Man	20	-
Woman	65	72
Non-binary	5	-
Prefer not to say	suppressed	-
Other	suppressed	-
Total aggregated sample	90	-
Ethnicity		
White	60	71
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	10	-
Any other ethnic group	10	-
Asian / Asian British	5	-
Prefer not to say	suppressed	-

Total aggregated sample	85	-
Disability - Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?		
Yes	15	-
No	75	83
Unknown	suppressed	-
Total aggregated sample	90	-
Disability - Do you experience barriers or limitations in your day-to-day activities related to any health conditions (including mental health), physical, sensory or cognitive differences?		
Yes, substantial barriers or limitations	suppressed	-
Yes, some/small barriers or limitations	25	28
No	65	72
Prefer not to say	suppressed	-
Total aggregated sample	90	-

Notes: [HESA standards](#) have been applied to all reported data.

There were some differences in reports of disabilities and limitations to everyday life across the three datasets. The UKRI dataset reported declared disabilities among two per cent of their award holders. Modern Slavery PEC reported 10 of their award applicants identified as disabled as defined under the Equality Act 2010. The survey had 15 respondents who considered themselves disabled. Over one quarter of respondents also highlighted that they faced some/small barriers or limitations to their everyday lives relating to health conditions or other physical, sensory or cognitive differences. This additional question that goes beyond legal definitions of disability is recommended by the latest guidance from the Wellcome initiative, *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health* (EDIS, 2022). It fits a more anti-ableist model identifying barriers in day-to-day life. Our findings support those found by EDIS pilots; that there is greater disclosure of conditions and, as they limit day-to-day life, represent issues that can be addressed (EDIS, 2022). People reporting limitations highlighted both organisational, interpersonal and individual challenges. For example, respondents highlighted the challenge of managing mental health in the context of high organisational demands.

Other diversity characteristics

The survey offered unique insight into the wider diversity of the modern slavery research workforce. On sexual orientation, the survey revealed that 76 per cent of participants identified as straight/heterosexual in the survey; Modern Slavery PEC monitoring data identified this rate was 65 per cent with a higher rate of non-disclosure.

Caring responsibilities among the survey sample were diverse. Fifty-two per cent of participants reported no caring responsibilities but there were large numbers of responses from people identifying that they had with sole or joint responsibility for caring for children. Thirty-four per cent identified they cared for children; 5 respondents identified that they cared for adults who needed support. Caring responsibilities were not collected in Modern Slavery PEC or the UKRI diversity monitoring datasets. Nor were they a point of discussion in the focus groups beyond the need to ensure childcare costs were covered to enable people with lived experience to participate in research. Caring responsibilities may represent a blind spot both in this research and in the field in general. According to Moreau and Robertson, very little is known about academics with caring responsibilities (Moreau & Robertson, 2019). These initial findings are a useful

starting point for exploring care giving in general and in research careers more specifically in the modern slavery field (see Recommendation 2.4).

The geographic spread of responses was dominated by London (see Table 2).

Table 2 The geographic spread of the modern slavery research workforce (locations are only included if they are reportable by HESA standards)

Current location of the modern slavery research workforce	Aggregated responses (n)
London	20
East Midlands	15
Yorkshire and the Humber	10
North West England	5
South East England	5
South West England	5
Wales	5
Other (non-UK)	15
Prefer not to say	10

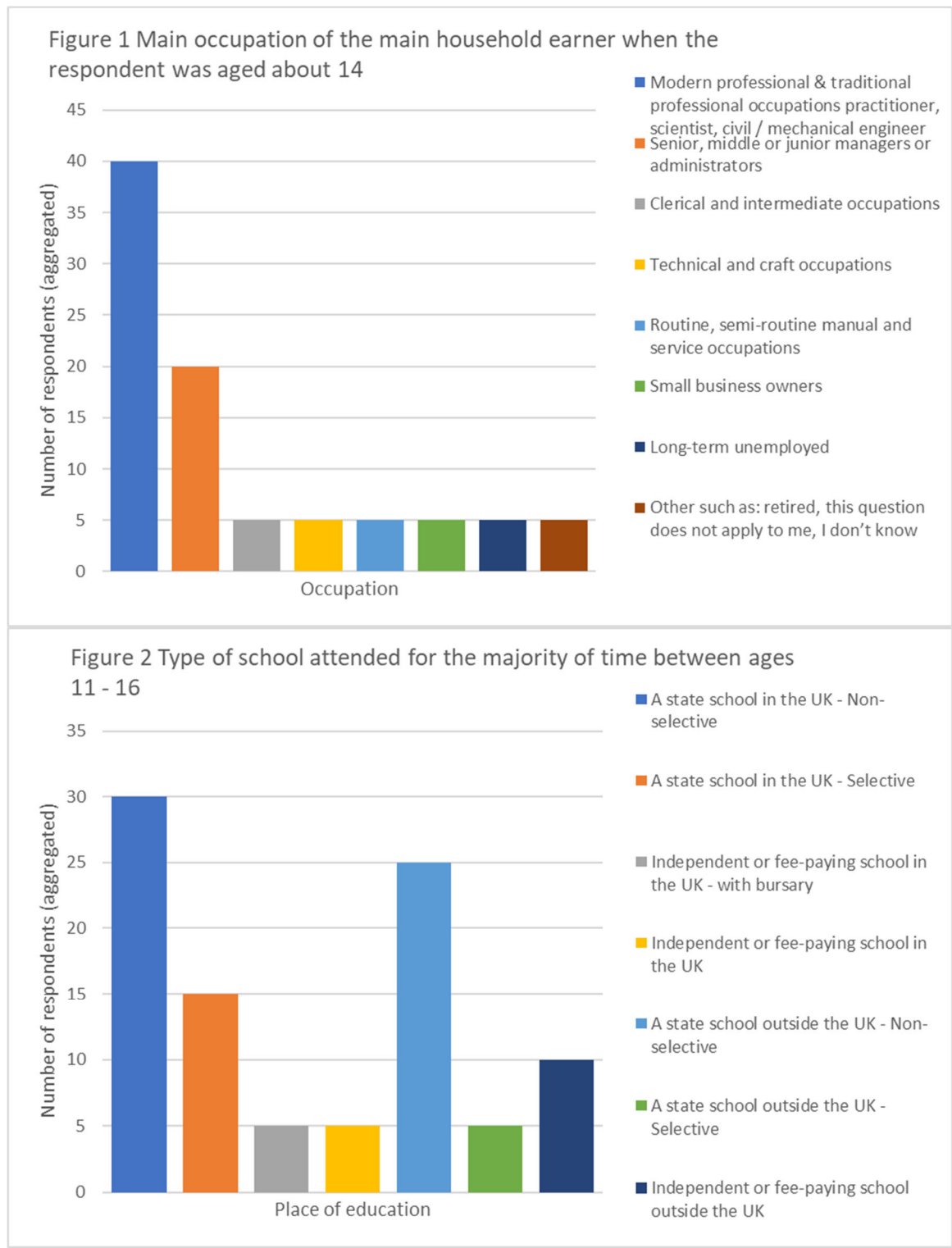
The relatively large number of people reporting ‘other’ locations within the survey may be explained by the large group of the research workforce reporting overseas nationality and education. It was not required that people working on UK publicly-funded research were currently based in the UK in order to take part in the survey and UK funding often allows for international partners. Thirty-two per cent of respondents reported a nationality other than British (including dual nationals) and 21 different nationalities were represented in the sample.

Religion and strongly held belief within the sample is summarised in Table 3. These data mirror those collected by Modern Slavery PEC; 50 per cent of their applicants reported no religion (including atheism) and 30 per cent identified as Christian.

Table 3: Religion and strongly held belief (more than one response was possible)

Religion of belief	Aggregated responses (n)	%
No religion	45	48
Christian	30	32
Spiritual	10	-
Jewish	5	-
Muslim	5	-
Prefer not to say	5	-

Socio-economic status was explored using two different measures in the survey. Figures 1 and 2 show the main occupation of the head of the household of the respondent aged 14 and the sort of school respondents attended during late childhood.



These data on school attendance as a proxy for background socio-economic status reflect those reported by the Social Research Association's assessment of the researcher workforce. Around half of their respondents (48 per cent) attended a non-

selective UK state school, 21 per cent attended selective UK state schools and 14 per cent attended independent UK schools (Social Research Association and the Young Foundation, 2021). The current survey, however, reveals a workforce drawn from a more international base, adding greater diversity and offering opportunity for different ways of conceiving of and conducting research. Figure 1, however, identifies that the workforce is drawn from people raised in relatively financially privileged households.

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of social identity such as age, race/ethnicity and nationality interact to generate social advantages and disadvantages. This indicates that intersectional approaches to EDI are required, as different aspects of social identity such as age, race/ethnicity and nationality may potentially feed into the way we carry out research. This point was reinforced in the focus group discussions, identifying that the purpose of collecting data on diversity characteristics should be done so in a way that considers these intersections and explicitly feeds that back into decisions around service design and delivery:

There's a balance to be struck between data collection, [that] can feel very much like box-ticking, [and] collecting that information which helps us to understand survivors as more than survivors of trafficking but actually that kind of intersectionality, the fact that they're gay or the fact that they're disabled, has had an additional impact on their experience and means that they've faced additional barriers to support. So, I think there's a real fine balance to be struck in terms of the purpose of why we're collecting certain information and making sure that it is to the benefit of those individuals that are taking part in the research as opposed to organisations looking like they've made their EDI quota, essentially.
(Community organisation participant 4)

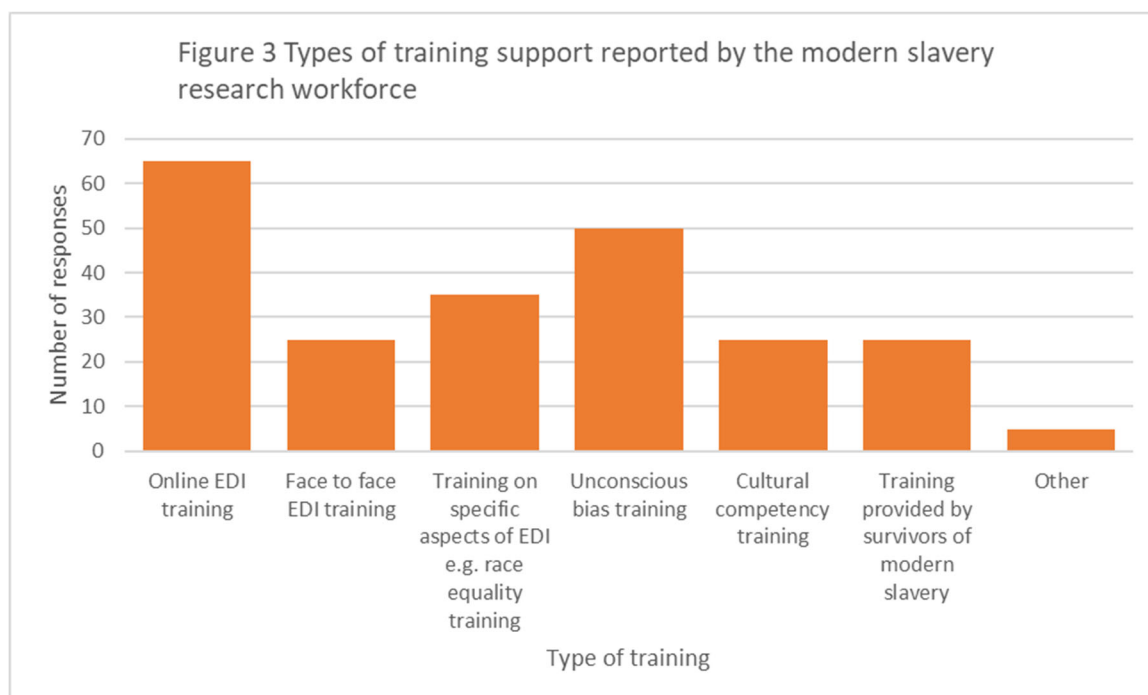
Role and experiences of working in the modern slavery research workforce

Reflecting the diversity of the survey sample, 15 respondents identified as having lived experience of exploitation and/or trafficking. Similar numbers were reported in Modern Slavery PEC data with 10 people reporting they had lived experience of modern slavery. Numbers were too small to report in terms of research leadership (for example, leading a research project as a Principal Investigator) among this population. Focus group discussion identified a desire to see research led and run by people with lived experience, identifying that such visibility would be a positive diversity outcome for the field that would offer new perspectives and skills:

I am a survivor, but I am a communication professional. If I was maybe working on a project, the way I would think about how important the communication is, is different from somebody that come from a financial industry or something like that, how they would think of it. So, it's those little things that are missing that I think it could be done to just improve things.
(Lived experience participant 1)

Respondents to the survey worked in a variety of organisational settings, indicating that public research funders have a range of expertise to draw from outside of higher education. Forty-three per cent of respondents did not currently work for a university or other higher education institution. Fifteen respondents identified as working in the civil society/charity sector. This provides an important resource for the modern slavery research field that could be further worked with and expanded on in the future to develop diverse research capacity.

The EDI support that researchers had received in terms of training are reported in Figure 3. It is notable that many had received some training, particularly online, and that although cultural competency training emerged as a topic that people were interested in/had undertaken training in in focus group discussions, this was not as well represented as many other forms of training in the survey.



Despite many forms of training being reported, respondents reported an expressed need for further support with over three quarters of respondents agreeing/strongly agreeing that people researching modern slavery needed additional support to improve EDI in research.

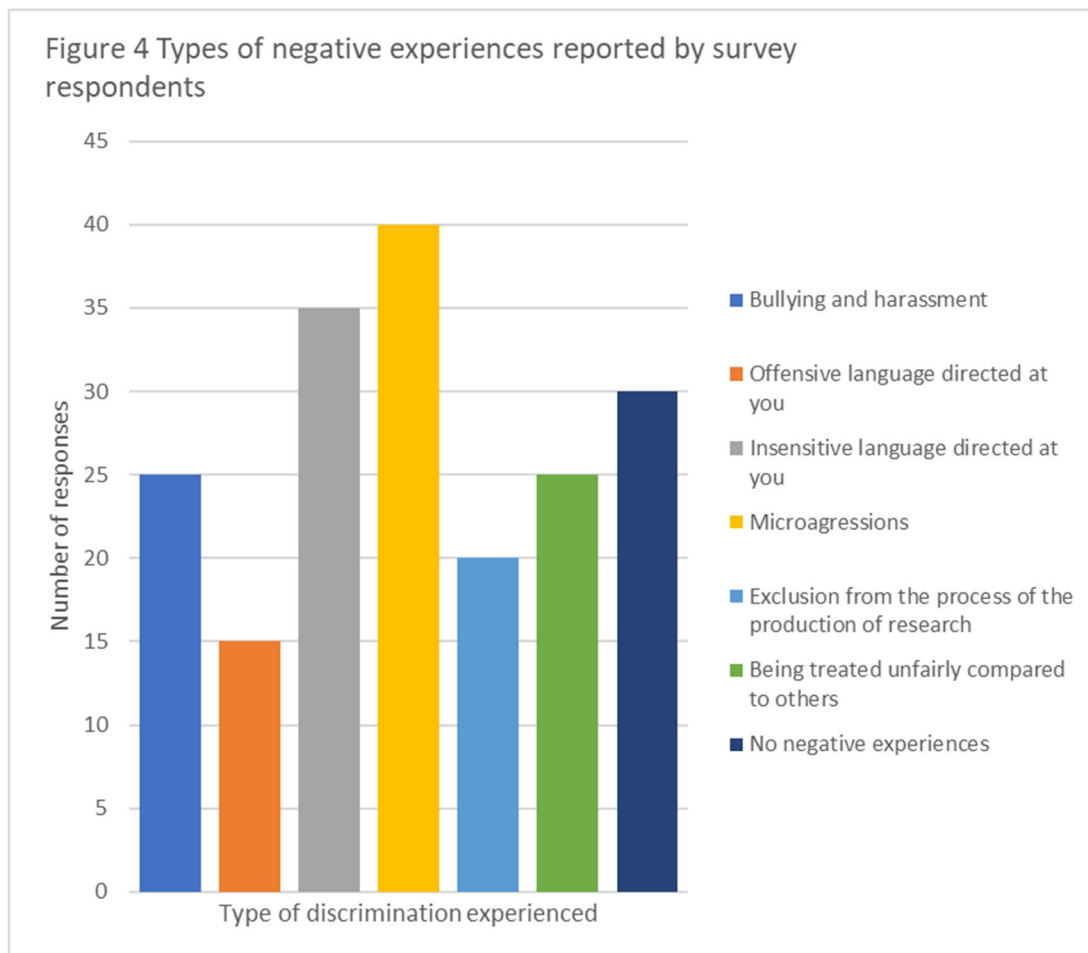
This expressed need was expanded in open text responses in the survey that identified not just training needs for researchers (such as support to identify how EDI specifically relates to modern slavery) but also suggestions for:

- “More events to bring groups together to create more diverse research teams”
- Addressing “saviourism” in the anti-trafficking sector (and, by implication, the modern slavery research field)
- “Increasing opportunities for early career professionals with lived experience”
- Building in an intersectional perspective to EDI in the field e.g. the intersection of class and economic marginalisation alongside other characteristics
- Ensuring EDI is not a ‘compliance’ or “tick box exercise” but ensuring it is values-driven

A final section of the survey concerned research workforce experiences of discriminatory practices (Figure 4). Overall, high levels of negative experiences were reported, with two thirds of respondents experiencing some form. Patterns of responses were not immediately discernible among different subgroups (e.g. among minoritised people or early career researchers) and require further exploration. Persistently high reporting of bullying and harassment has been seen across the higher education research sector (Barratt-Pugh & Krestelica, 2019) and has informed the creation of guidelines such as the Vitae Researcher Development Concordat (Vitae, 2019) and British Academy work

on improving research cultures. The work of the Concordat includes principles on supportive and inclusive research cultures that places responsibilities on institutions, research managers and researchers themselves. With higher education institutions signing up to the Concordat, committing to implementing its principles and being required to report on it publicly, there appears to be sector-wide attempts to address this long-standing problem. Focus group respondents spoke only sparingly of negative experiences in research, contrasting sharply with discussion among the lived experience and community organisation focus groups about harmful policy and service user experiences.

These survey and focus group findings raise concerns about the state of practice in the research sector in general and suggest further examination of discriminatory practices in modern slavery policy and practice *and* research is needed (see Recommendation 2.5).



EDI in the research process: Research design, participation and reporting

This section focuses on how EDI has been and could be addressed in the modern slavery research process. We draw from two main sources of evidence: 1) An audit of research reports produced by Modern Slavery PEC funded projects, and 2) Focus group discussions. In addition, we reference materials produced outside of the modern slavery research field to demonstrate some emerging practice on how to improve EDI throughout the research process.

Research is multi-faceted and non-uniform. It is, however, characterised by a series of stages, some of which we consider here. The UK's Government Social Research (GSR) service identify four broad stages: 1) Research design, 2) Data collection, 3) Conducting analysis, 4) Reporting (Government Social Research service, 2022). Equality, diversity and inclusion cuts across each stage and supporting guidance prompts researchers to ask EDI questions of themselves at each point. For example, GSR identify design and data collection inclusivity questions such as:

- Who do I need to sample?
- Do I have the right sampling approach?
- Are my research materials accessible?
- Is my recruitment strategy inclusive?

Additional research stages including the development of, for example, research questions and research dissemination/mobilisation activities, raise more questions to consider. For example, focus group data identified that researchers need to think about who should contribute to the development of research questions and the how to promote widescale accessibility of research outputs.

The following focuses on how a sample of modern slavery research produced by Modern Slavery PEC reports inclusive practice in research design, research conduct and the diversity of participants in analysis. This was chosen for several reasons. First, the Modern Slavery PEC are a novel, UK first, large investment in modern slavery research in the UK and so are a powerful actor in the field. Second, we were commissioned to advise the Modern Slavery PEC on how it could improve its EDI practice and the advice and guidance it gave to commissioned researchers, therefore understanding their approach was important to this project. Third, the reports were recently published and so represented contemporary research practice.

There are limitations to this approach, however. For example, the analysis does not report on how EDI issues were integrated across studies around the whole of the research cycle for each project (from the development of the research question to dissemination of findings). Furthermore, we did not engage directly with research teams to understand their specific approaches (and survey responses were anonymous therefore could not be linked to individual projects). Our analysis also does not examine additional publications arising from Modern Slavery PEC studies that may provide greater detail on study design, sampling and analytical variables. It is also important to note that studies varied considerably in their design. This reflected many influencing factors such as the availability of existing datasets, the quality of those data and the types of questions being asked. For example, of the 22 reports, 12 studies included reviews of literature. These reviews' reporting on EDI are limited to that documented in the literature base. They are also, however, dependent on researchers designing in EDI considerations to the review questions. It has also been noted in other, more established fields such as health equity research there is, as yet, no consensus on how EDI is reported in reviews (Welch et al., 2022). However, leading institutions that regulate the

conduct and reporting of systematic reviews such as the Cochrane and Campbell Collaborations provide helpful guidance on considering equity issues (Cochrane and Campbell Collaboration, n.d.). Such guidance could be tailored to the needs of the modern slavery field to include specific considerations such as the involvement of people with experience of exploitation.

The main limitation of the audit of Modern Slavery PEC studies was the lack of detailed information provided in reports and summaries on how research was designed and conducted (see Recommendation 1.4). This may have been outlined prospectively at the funding bid stage and future research may benefit from analysing these data. Despite these limitations, this analysis provides some insight into how modern slavery research is designed, conducted and reported in relation to EDI.

Research design and conduct

Focus group participants highlighted the importance of robust study design:

How is the sampling in terms of EDI? How are you sampling also based on what your outcome is expected to be? What is your methodology? Are you using diversity? Who are my participants in terms of EDI? Am I choosing just a small group, have got adequate number that I want for my proposal? Am I inclusive in my EDI selection of the participants as well as the methodology? Is it diverse enough to be inclusive? Is it diverse enough? (Community organisation participant 5)

Analysis of Modern Slavery PEC reports revealed that the current research could not answer these questions for each project, owing to the lack of information provided in research reports. While EDI may have been considered at the design stage, information on the nature of those discussions and decisions were not available to the research team as these were not published. A small number of reports made some elements of research design and conduct explicit and reasonably clear; most were implicit, and a few were absent. Equality, diversity and inclusion concerns also varied in their prominence in design and conduct descriptions and justifications.

Particular strengths in some studies included:

- Explicit reference to the inclusion of people with lived experience of modern slavery in research design, advice/steering functions. One study was explicitly driven by participatory principles, centred on the needs of children who had been exploited (Hynes et al. 2022). Methodological description in this case was explicit in its description of child-centred design that was trauma informed and rights focussed. The design of this study drew in established principles of participatory research (space, voice, audience and influence) (Lundy, 2007) and the principle of 'protection through participation' (Warrington, 2020). The standard of methodological description and research design decision making was a good example of how EDI can be considered during the research process.
- Languages: Conducting research interviews in languages other than English (e.g. Arabic/English in Sudanese COVID-19 study, Lumley-Sapanski et al. 2021 and Bengali in Islam et al. 2022). Making interpreter services available during research (e.g. in interviews/focus groups) and translating research material (e.g. surveys) in community languages (for example, Burcu et al. 2021)
- Research designed to collect, collate and analyse a range of project-relevant diversity characteristics such as socio-economic background, nationality, ethnicity and age (for example Burcu et al. 2021, Lumley-Sapanski et al. 2021)

- Optimised response rates through partnership with relevant third sector organisations that provided reach into specific, often marginalised populations (e.g. Romanian and Bulgarian workers in the UK, Burcu et al. 2021; Black and minority ethnic communities in the UK, Such et al. 2022). Larger sample sizes in quantitative studies meant they were sufficiently powered to enable meaningful sub-group analyses and significance testing (for example, differences experienced by Roma populations compared to the wider population, Burcu et al. 2021)

Focus group data revealed that engaging with persons with lived experience in research had a potential EDI benefit in that inclusively designed and conducted projects could act as a part of a process of recovery and a “platform for healing ... a vehicle for justice” (researcher participant 2). Another participant explained this potential further:

My thoughts are around empowerment during the research; that people are empowered during the research to be able to authentically kind of share their voice and knowing that that will be listened to and respected. But also, the process of that research actually helps that person moving forward as well. So that process of being empowered through that research actually leaves that person with something; I guess that sense of empowerment moving forward
(community organisation participant 2).

It remains underexplored how this strength can be best articulated and embedded in study design for the benefit of high quality, inclusive research in the future. This is a particular challenge across the range of study types and research questions. Hynes et al.’s example is a helpful addition to the work of the Modern Slavery PEC in this regard because of its child-centredness and participatory orientation. The challenge is to examine how EDI principles may be applied across a suite of study types. This issue also relates to an acknowledged tension in modern slavery research that remains unresolved: the extent to which research can or should serve as advocacy and activism. (See Recommendations 1.1-1.3)

An additional theme from focus groups about research conduct related to developing the competencies of researchers by encouraging discussion in a context that offered personal and professional reassurance:

We were talking about taking care with each other, that we will get things wrong, we will say things clumsily, we will do things in a way that is with the best intentions but that it comes out wrong. I think setting up a set of principles that allows that to happen and that we're all doing this work in the best of faith, that it's not a tick box but a genuine commitment to EDI for the right reasons.
(community organisation participant 5)

This idea has been presented in other work as shift from framing diversity discussion in the context of ‘safe spaces’ to ‘brave spaces’ for open dialogue for the advancement of diversity and social justice (Arao and Clemens 2013); principles that coincide with the modern slavery research sector.

Missing elements:

- Although 12 Modern Slavery PEC studies referred to including people with lived experience, few provided insight into the characteristics of samples or advisory groups. There are many reasons for this including the extent to which anonymity is prioritised over recognition. Explicit examination of these tensions, whom they affect, in what circumstances and in what way they might be resolved in projects would be helpful. Additionally, the reporting of how lived experience was

analysed (e.g. by whom and from what position accounts were being analysed as well as analytical frameworks) or weighted in analysis when studies were mixed methods was largely absent.

- The question of who decides the research agenda is a point of reflection from the audited Modern Slavery PEC studies. The suite of research did not include projects that forefronted diversity characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender identity and maternal status or discussed in depth issues of race, racism and ethnicity. Focus group discussion and advisory group comments highlighted the importance, and sometimes centrality, of these issues for the field. The EDI priorities raised for the research agenda in focus groups did not seem to reflect the themes and topics published in the reviewed suite of Modern Slavery PEC studies (see Appendix 3).

Reporting research

Table 4 summarises the reporting of diversity in Modern Slavery PEC studies. It shows that populations of concern and/or sample characteristics are reported in part. As noted above, there may be barriers to and good reasons why research participants may not wish to disclose personal information or why researchers may not collect and report them (e.g. relevance, topic area, anonymity). However, applying an EDI lens to research topics and questions may result in more routine collection of important sample characteristics that could improve the overall quality of and insight gained from modern slavery research. We found that characteristics protected in equalities law such as gender and age were most commonly reported, alongside other characteristics relevant to the field of study, namely, socio-economic status (reflecting the relationship between poverty and modern slavery), nationality and lived experience. Some characteristics such as sexual orientation did not appear in any of the published studies.

Table 4 Reporting of protected (*in italics*) and other diversity characteristics in Modern Slavery PEC reports published until September 2022

Characteristic reported in research study	Total number of studies reporting
Age	13
<i>Disability</i>	2
<i>Gender reassignment</i>	0
<i>Marriage and civil partnership</i>	0
<i>Pregnancy and maternity</i>	3
<i>Race</i>	6
<i>Religion or belief</i>	6
<i>Gender</i>	16
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	0
Socio-economic status	13
Nationality	11
Geographic location of interest	20
Lived experience of exploitation and/or trafficking	12
Care leaver	1

Content analysis of the publications revealed some strengths in terms of reporting sample characteristics (thereby revealing a better picture of who is involved in research) and in making methods more transparent (enabling scrutiny of EDI):

- The contextualisation of modern slavery in known structural, social and economic inequalities. Many reports highlighted how social inequalities reflected and reinforced modern slavery and human trafficking and provided recommendations and action points that required coordinated and/or policy action to address these wider structural/systemic issues as well as action that could be taken at a more local/community level
- The publication of reports, summaries or knowledge mobilisation products in languages other than English among studies with a direct audience outside of English-speaking countries (e.g. LeBaron et al., Obokata et al. 2021)
- The inclusion of appendices in reports more clearly identified and made transparent the ways in which research participation was being made more inclusive (e.g. descriptions of focus group content, examples of engaging with minoritised people in advisory groups)
- The inclusion of data that included sample characteristics (e.g. nationality and gender in Bhutta et al. 2021) or analyses in appendices that reported sub-group analyses (e.g. LeBaron et al. 2021)
- Attendance to geographical variation in sampling to represent the range of experiences of modern slavery support systems across the UK (Murphy et al. 2022)
- Recommendations from research that focussed on the need for more and high-quality data that accounted for a broad range of population characteristics to enable their analysis and to better understand intersecting dis/advantages (e.g. Rights Lab 2021 Top 20 source non-UK countries for modern slavery in the UK)

Missing elements:

- The lack of detail in the reporting of research made it difficult to judge if and how questions of equality, diversity and inclusion were considered in many studies. Allied to this was a general absence of discussion of ethical and safeguarding issues in primary research with people living in difficult circumstances or the inclusion of supplementary material that would indicate EDI issues had been considered.
- Detailed descriptions of the socio-demographic characteristics of study samples were not routine.
- Many studies included 'expert informants' or 'anti-slavery stakeholders'. This sample population was particularly poorly described in reporting. This is not to say that experts by experience should ever be required to disclose exploitation (Asquith et al., 2022), rather, there should be greater descriptive transparency about who is being sampled, for what reason and what their relevant characteristics are. For example, expert informants or stakeholders may include people who work for government, business, community organisations or the police. It is important for researchers to be clear about from whom they are drawing data.
- The reporting of research would also benefit from authors reflecting on their position in the research in relation to those participating in it. Explorations of potential bias and reflections on theoretical and contextual standpoint could be usefully explored in research studies to make clearer how research in the field is being approached and understood. This should include reflections on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Allied with this would be more helpful and thorough descriptions of and justifications for analytical frameworks and if/how they align with an equity perspective.
- No studies in the sample included data availability statements, signposting to data repositories or open-source code used in analysis. Few included study protocols. These additional materials would aid the transparency of research.

This is important when seeking to explore the extent to which equity-related issues have been considered throughout the research lifecycle. Implementation of open research policies by UK Research and Innovation could accelerate this process (see Recommendation 3.5).

Focus group analysis highlighted a desire among those with lived experience, researchers and community organisations to tell the stories of the diversity of people affected by modern slavery. This had to be rooted in EDI principles of respect, rebalance of power and providing voice to those who were seldom heard. Extractive relationships needed to be avoided. A participant with lived experience commented:

I think when we look at equality and diversity and inclusion, the person-centred approach is very important. We can't always assume that somebody from this certain part of the world, whether they're Eastern European, whether they're Africans, has been subjected to a particular form of modern slavery because we know from research that this maybe more particular in that part of the world. We have to be open minded in listening to people because that's only where research and statistics and all these things can be more so accurate. It's never going to be 100% but it can develop to be more accurate, if we actually listen to what we have been told. (Lived experience participant 3)

These comments suggest that reporting research should ensure that the situated, experiential knowledge of the diversity of affected people as well as academic knowledge of researchers is brought to the study of modern slavery (see Recommendation 1.8).

EDI in funder policy and practices

Our final consideration in this study of EDI in the modern slavery research field relates to how such work is funded. Here, we draw from data gathered from research funders operating in the UK with public funds. We have also included some non-publicly funded organisations (e.g. Wellcome, Leverhulme Trust) in our analysis because these funders have historically supported some modern slavery research and have established EDI track records. Sampled organisations' (see Appendix 4) documentation of EDI statements, strategies, action plans, evaluations and other activity were explored. These documents were searched for on-line (December 2022-February 2023) and analysed with the view to identify examples of good and emerging practice in EDI and to inform actionable recommendations for the Modern Slavery PEC and other funding stakeholders. We also include focus group data to reveal how funders themselves, researchers, persons with lived experience and community organisations interact with the process of research funding.

A limitation to this analysis is the timing of the search conducted. In the time shortly after our search (March 2023), UKRI published a renewed EDI strategy alongside four research council EDI action plans. Owing to the timing of these changes, our analysis draws from some out-of-date UKRI information. We have, however, sought to ensure reference to new documentation where it has been possible.

Overarching findings

As one focus group participant noted:

I think funders have a responsibility to promote their application process or opportunities as far and wide as possible (community organisation participant 1).

This discussion point related to how funders could improve EDI in modern slavery research by engaging wider constituencies in research funding opportunities beyond higher education institutions. Community organisations working with affected people were viewed as a primary and underused source of knowledge that had the potential to both improve the quality of research and improve EDI in the field. There was enthusiasm for this within all focus group discussions.

Instead of looking for researchers in the same spaces, the same universities, same networks, maybe we might want to go to NGOs more or going to spaces of, I don't know, public health, different areas of concern that have connections to the research area, but not necessarily usually targeted. (Researcher participant 1)

The connection between EDI and engaging with and across diverse organisations as a way to achieve that was not commonly cited in the formal documentation of 17 organisations we examined. All had a stated EDI approach, communicated as a policy and/or principles although some of the institutes that formed the Modern Slavery PEC did not have documentation available that was bespoke to their centre. Rather, EDI strategy and action was guided by a broader University-level EDI approach. Institutes that form part of the Modern Slavery PEC may wish to make it clear on their public-facing websites that there is a specific strategy/plan that applies to their work as part of the Centre. Two of the six institutes had publicly available EDI strategies (BIICL, Alan Turing Institute). One was available on request (Rights Lab).

Among funders, equality, diversity and inclusion was framed across all organisations as important to meeting goals. The National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) visualised a framework to identify how EDI cut across all its functions and people it reached (informing the design of Figure 1). Other organisations variously focused on goals in specific areas of activity. Wellcome, for example, identified EDI goals in terms of its role as a funder, as an employer and in relation to its ambition to deliver equal health outcomes. These narrative presentations of EDI goals were more common than the structured framework adopted by NIHR. Narratives were formed around strategy and policy. Some organisations (e.g. Wellcome) centred EDI within overall organisational strategy. Others were standalone policies (e.g. Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford).

Action plans were the primary means of achieving and monitoring goals, for example, we identified bespoke action plans on workforce (UKRI), six action plans across the research councils and a five-year action plan with multiple themes (NIHR). Action plans included means of monitoring progress with some identifying how it would be reported (e.g. Leverhulme) and some publishing evidence of actions achieved and ongoing (e.g. Scottish Funding Council, Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Report 2021-2025). While there were many similarities in the way EDI was approached, outlined, planned for and actioned, it was apparent that the focus on EDI was emergent for many funders and evidence on the success of actions was scarce. For example, UKRI's March 2023 EDI strategy was its first; the recent funding of a UKRI EDI Caucus to grow the evidence

base is also novel in the UK. In addition, commissioned reviews of evidence reveal a paucity of research on effective EDI interventions (Guyan & Oloyede, 2019). The modern slavery research field can, then, through this early formative and summative work, inform and benefit from the development of this growing movement.

Emergent and promising practice

Analysis of documents revealed four main themes around which research funders focused their EDI activities and outputs. These were: i) valuing representation of diversity at an organisational level, ii) improving accessibility of funding, iii) focussed support for careers, for example, through targeted internships, fellowships, mentorship and training and, iv) setting diversity targets. Other strategies and tactics were employed across organisations, notably the adoption/mandating of Impact Assessments/Equality Statements for proposed research programmes (e.g. Gender Impact Assessments, GCRF and Equality Impact Assessment for some Doctoral Training Programme initiatives) and requirements to include non-academic partners in bids for funding (Modern Slavery PEC). In addition, funders often facilitated the creation and sustainment of peer networks of people with similar backgrounds as a means of developing peer support and a sense of inclusion (e.g. Wellcome's Disability Interest Group, Socio-Economic Equity Staff Network, Race Equity Network and Interfaith group). While considerable activity appeared on-going, there was little available information on the impact and effectiveness of initiatives. Guyan and Oloyede identified that training programmes, leadership development programmes, recognition schemes and employer engagement and outreach schemes were more able to demonstrate efficacy than other initiatives such as mentoring and family-friendly or career break policies (Guyan & Oloyede, 2019). Improving methods of assessing success and failure in EDI initiatives are required across the research landscape, as well as in modern slavery research.

i) Valuing representation of diversity in the organisation

Building and sustaining a diverse research workforce was the goal of many funders. This goal often centred on diversity in terms of the nine Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics and meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty. In some cases, initiatives extended beyond them into, for example, prioritising low income (e.g. Leverhulme), care leavers (Scottish Funding Council) and persons with lived experience of modern slavery (Modern Slavery PEC).

Box 1 Building a diverse workforce. The NIHR Research Inclusion Action Plan 2022-27

This action plan commits to workforce inclusion in:

- Goal 1.4 Introduce an NIHR workforce inclusion survey
- Goal 1.5 Develop and put in place an NIHR-wide inclusion training plan for the NIHR workforce
- Goal 4.1 Work with NIHR employer institutions to improve the coverage, collection and analysis of diversity data from our workforce
- Goal 4.4 Embed a sustainable and consistent approach to the collection of research workforce diversity data, including our infrastructure workforce

This data-gathering approach is implemented by an internal Research Inclusion team and is monitored by the NIHR Research Inclusion Programme Board. NIHR are committed to sharing metrics and stories of the impact of the new strategy. As such, the plan incorporates good governance principles of transparency and accountability.

While these formal approaches represent progress on EDI in research, focus groups noted the importance of developing a strong narrative on the importance of EDI for the modern slavery field. One participant explained it in terms of disruptive leadership and challenging old EDI narratives:

For me, it's like the disruptive sort of angle rather than a sort of compliance angle that I try and focus on when I'm communicating about EDI, because I feel like we need to sort of disrupt the way things are done. And that's exciting because if we come up with new questions and new answers that's more interesting than old answers, old people old, same old stuff, right? So it's about really believing that and explaining it in your core process, so it feels real, it doesn't feel like we have to do EDI, so you have to fill this form. In some ways, it's about less form filling and more communicating (Funder participant 4).

Beyond these leadership and communication approaches, other participants identified parts of the research system such as advisory group representation, peer review membership and researcher recruitment process as sites for meaningful change. One focus group member noted how some people were that advantaged over others in the recruitment process:

If you advertise in certain places, you're going to get certain types of applications. And if you advertise in the same places, you're going to get the same types of applications. It [also] goes one step back to research funders and some of their requirements. So, for example, with some funders, any researchers that you hire need to be postdoctoral and you can't hire people who might have lived experience or would probably know a lot more about what you're researching than someone who has a PhD but you're not allowed to hire them because the requirement is to be a postdoctoral position. (Researcher participant 6).

Rethinking these processes are acknowledged in some funder documentation and guidance (e.g. Wellcome Equitable Funding Practice Library) but mainstreaming alternative practices are non-routine. As such, organisations need to consider how their advertisement of funding calls, and job roles can have the appropriate flexibility to ensure a diverse range of candidate can apply.

ii) Improving access to funding

There was evidence of efforts to improve accessibility of research funding especially among underrepresented groups. This included reaching out to under-represented groups through third sector organisations (e.g. Modern Slavery PEC), and providing improved application support guidance and changing applicant processes and requirements (e.g. NIHR Research Professorship nomination processes to support ethnic minority senior researchers).

Box 2 Changing CV requirements: The Resume for Researchers (R4R) initiative

This initiative has been adopted by multiple funders inside and outside the UK (e.g. Royal Society, UKRI, Wellcome, Luxembourg National Research Found) to expand the criteria by which career achievements, skills and experiences are judged. The R4R initiative responds to the need to generate a shift in research culture away from a narrow range of 'traditional' performance metrics (e.g. publications, funding, citations) and towards a broader range of skills that, in principle, values diverse career trajectories and backgrounds (Strinzel et al., 2021). At the core of the initiative is the narrative CV, accompanied with guidance on how to present diverse experiences and

contributions. These include contributions to a positive and research culture such as equality, diversity and inclusion, public engagement and collaborations.

Focus group discussion with funders highlighted how improving access to research grants beyond academic institutions was a recognised issue but one that was challenging to resolve, commenting:

You can design what you want but if you're not eligible for that funding, you're not eligible for that funding. (Funder participant 2)

Community organisations pressed for improved support and more flexible criteria to enable more diverse involvement (see Recommendation 2.2), focussing on the needs of the research when developing criteria:

I'm just wondering about the criteria that funders expect and whether there's a sense of actually what is really important criteria in this piece of research and what actually is there just because it's always been there? (Community organisation participant 3)

These insights suggest that consultation with affected people and the organisations that serve them should be undertaken meaningfully, not just on the direction of research or topics of interest (e.g. Modern Slavery PEC engages with a lived experience consultant for all their calls for funding and funding panels) but on who might be best placed to address them (see Recommendation 2.3) and what criteria is important in assessing them.

iii) Focussed support for careers to improve EDI

Many organisations put processes in place to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds and to enable career development. These often focussed on people that were considered a strategic priority with different programmes offering tailored incentives such as the scholarships in Box 3. Programmes represent a positive action approach to promote equity. In other words, programmes specifically focused on addressing some of the challenges underrepresented groups could encounter under usual circumstances. They were intentional attempts to redress inequities in access to opportunities to a research career.

Box 3 Entry into doctoral studies: Leverhulme Doctoral Scholarships scheme (LDS) for low income and Black students

In 2022 Leverhulme announced the expansion of their doctoral scholarships to improve representation of low income and Black students. The scheme takes a ring-fenced approach to funding PhDs with institutions able to apply for Masters 'plus' additional awards (extending the usual Leverhulme quota). This enables candidates to undertake a year of masters' study in addition to a follow-on PhD. The programmes are well funded (overcoming the barrier of paying for living expenses) and provide research cost stipends. The first cohort of students is being recruited in 2023.

In the field of modern slavery research, the Modern Slavery PEC and the Office of the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner have been actively experimenting with ways to enhance diverse engagement in research careers. One notable approach has been the creation of research roles specifically tailored for persons with lived experience (e.g. 8 week paid internship for a researcher with lived experience of modern slavery advertised in 2021). The field would benefit from evaluation of these initiatives.

iv) Setting diversity targets and success criteria

Organisational targets (such as those in Box 1 Building a diverse research workforce) were set as part of the governance of EDI for funders. Examples are in Box 4 below. Beyond diversity metrics, we found fewer examples of assessing inclusivity (e.g. how researchers/advisors to research experience inclusivity in projects or programmes) or equality as an outcome within research systems (e.g. how research culture has shifted towards improved equality). In addition, several research EDI action plans identified time-bound 'deliverables' or non-metricised 'success criteria' rather than discrete 'targets' (e.g. AHRC and ESRC EDI action plans from 2023-)

Box 4 Examples of diversity targets and success criteria among funders

- Wellcome Trust: By 2025, 30% of Wellcome staff will be from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, across all levels
- NIHR: By 2027, aspirations for NIHR committees and panels to include at least 7% disabled people, 20% people from ethnic minorities and 50% females

The extent to which targets such as these effectively promote improved EDI is subject to debate. In one respect, targets and defining success criteria represents an accountability mechanism for publicly funded institutions. In another respect, focus groups were resistant to 'tick box' or bureaucratic approaches to EDI. In addition, funder discussions highlighted how well-intentioned management mechanisms can be implemented in inappropriate ways:

Now my understanding is that for every activity that [the funder] undertakes, we're supposed to create what's called an 'equality impact assessment'. Ideally that should be done at the same time the call has been developed and ideally at least drafted before the funding decision was made. I've never seen that happen. So people at the strategic level will come up with the idea, here's the call, here is the amount of money, here's the timeline and then it's spread down the chain and then to us make it happen and the first thing we see is well where is the equality impact assessment? And there isn't one. So that's always our first task, trying to retrospectively understand and fit that call into a framework which we haven't been given (Funder participant 1)

The modern slavery research field may wish to consult specifically with multiple affected stakeholders on this issue before developing specific metrics for judging EDI success. These can inform if or how processes such as Equality Impact Assessments can address EDI in appropriate, meaningful ways. In addition, there is scope for further innovation in EDI in research, Appendix 6.

Discussion and recommendations

Overarching points of discussion & recommendations

Modern slavery research is fundamentally driven by the goal to eradicate it and the inequalities it reproduces. It would, therefore, be an opportunity missed if the field did not explicitly build on this starting point by integrating approaches that are intentionally equality, inclusivity and diversity driven. As a relatively young and growing field of enquiry there are also distinct opportunities to build it ethically, inclusively and diversely. Achieving this ambition is understood differently between people and it may be that a consensus is yet to be realised. For example, a focus group respondent identified ‘social justice’ as the “blanket around EDI” (Researcher participant 4) that brought the strands together as a whole. Alternative ‘blankets’ or umbrellas exist, such as universal human rights. A lived experience focus group member saw EDI from the perspective of being heard or ‘voice’, another spoke of valuing difference and several commented on the primacy of equity. It is a conversation for the field and one that seems necessary to ensure modern slavery research demonstrates how EDI is a “golden thread” (Researcher participant 7) throughout it. Examples of how to reach consensus across a broad research-engaged constituency are available and may be used as a model to conduct our own consensus exercise (Mir et al., 2013).

Some focus groups participants saw a distinct need to address the foundations of established and powerful ‘research cultures’ that privileged some people and perspectives over others, particularly the privileging of academic knowledge over other forms. This was evident in the focus group with people with lived experience where a list of overlooked research topics and populations was identified (Appendix 5). This insight points to the need for better means of generating research agendas that reflect the experiences of people and communities most affected by modern slavery.

There are multiple ways through which improved EDI could be achieved. These include large scale and long-term programmatic shifts in emphasis that cut across the whole of the research landscape (Figure 1) as well as mid- and individual-level changes in practice. Many of the following recommendations focus on the more immediate, pragmatic and actionable actions research actors, particularly the Modern Slavery PEC, national funders and researchers in the field can take. We have generated these recommendations in the context of a specific field of study and with affected communities/people in mind. Much of the following is, however, applicable across the broader scientific landscape.

Recommendations for funders and researchers on EDI in the research process

1.1 Promote modern slavery research as a site for brave, open or courageous conversations

This includes talking about modern slavery *and* EDI *and* about how they intersect. In the words of a focus group participant:

I would say, don't be afraid to touch on certain subjects that may seem a little bit off the core, a little bit taboo. ... sometimes all of us can sugar-coat things, but I feel for any real change to start happening, we need to take the sugar away ...

sometimes we have to say the things that nobody wants to say (Community organisation participant 3).

For funders, this includes talking about EDI in a way that disrupts the notion that it is a bureaucratic exercise. Rather, EDI should be a topic led with commitment for change that will result in better research questions, research design, research conduct and, ultimately, impact. **For researchers**, this includes intentional curiosity about how and with whom research questions are developed, how they are addressed and for whom research is intended to benefit. EDI requires greater attention throughout the research process and this research indicates that further engagement and training of researchers in that process is necessary. This is about developing capacity in consulting with affected people and communities as well as policy and practice partners throughout the research process. **Funders** could create supportive and non-judgemental opportunities for research-involved people to engage with researchers to meet this goal. They might invest in opportunities for people to explore EDI in non-threatening environments that include a diversity of people. Such discussions could include: critical challenge to issues such as 'saviourism' in modern slavery research, the impact of colonial legacies on the field or histories of discrimination. This would support the development of modern slavery research with critical EDI thought and practice at its core. Bodies like Modern Slavery PEC may wish to consider including requirements for researchers to consult with affected people and communities prior to bidding for funding, similar to the requirements of funders such as the NIHR which necessitates researchers to undertake Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement in the process of applying for funding. To ensure that this improves EDI and, by implication, research, such a requirement should be designed to be diverse and inclusive. Again, **researchers** may require support and enabling environments (e.g. open conversation, non-judgemental) to do this well.

1.2 Make explicit the values, goals and principles of modern slavery research. State for whom research serves

This research points to the need to create a set of EDI values and principles upon which all modern slavery research can be anchored. Ideally, this should be resourced by **funders** and generated with affected people and communities as well as with funders, researchers, community organisations, policy makers and practitioners. Explicit linkage between the principles and the ultimate goal of modern slavery research (to inform decision and practices that result in minimising or eradicating modern slavery) should be made. Several formats for such consultation and co-creation are possible: written consultation responses to open questions, open forums for discussion, digital consultation and 'Commission'-style initiatives (e.g. Scotland's Poverty Truth Commission) could be used. A mix of methods would be preferable to optimise opportunities for engagement. **Researchers** should perform these values in practice by actively seeking to engage with those who are intended to benefit from research.

1.3 Show how research reflects those values and goals

Researchers and funders should identify pathways from equity-oriented goals to research components including the generation and selection of questions, choice of research design, methodology and method, research conduct, analysis, validation, dissemination and mobilisation. These may be presented as pathways to change or pathways to affected population benefit.

1.4 Report methods transparently and openly

More transparent reporting of modern slavery research will surface inclusive practice, diversity in samples and research limitations, enabling clearer judgement of how EDI has been designed into research studies. **Researchers** have access to existing standards of reporting from outside the modern slavery field and these may be adopted or adapted to suit modern slavery research (see recommendation 3.5). A full range of mechanisms to improve transparency are available including study protocols, review protocols, adding methodological supplementary material, depositing data in repositories for re-use and including reflective accounts of researchers in reports. Adopting principles of open research should be made explicit by **Modern Slavery PEC** in funding and reporting guidelines, in line with the requirements of the UK Research Councils.

1.5 Assess the characteristics of sample populations through consultation with affected people to inform sampling strategies

These will vary by project but issues such as time since trafficking/exploitation experience, legal status in relation to immigration, family histories of migration and length of time spent in exploitative circumstances were identified as relevant diversity characteristics that could be included in sampling strategies and when reporting research. **Researchers** should identify a suite of possible diversity characteristics to consider in studies. **Funders** could support a consultation/research process that could generate such a resource for application across the field. Similarly, **funders and researchers** should work together to identify what are meaningful intersections of disadvantage in funding calls, research bids, research design, conduct and reporting. Implementation of specific sampling strategies and including sensitive variables in modern slavery research should be guided by ethical considerations, the relevance of collecting specific data to the research question and in consultation with affected people. Again, pre-study consultation mechanisms with people with lived experience (such as Public and Patient Involvement in health research) could be mandated by funders (as does the NIHR) or be implemented in a lighter-touch way through guidance and codes of practice.

1.6 Employ and document routine reflexivity

Good research practice requires a reflexive orientation. Documenting reflexive team discussions, dialogue with lay partners, advisory members and community-based colleagues by **research teams** is required. In the longer term and with the support of a mechanism for collating these documentations, a knowledge base from which to draw improved research practice could be developed (e.g., in the form of toolkits or design prompts) either by funders or research centres.

1.7 Validate, co-create and co-produce research with affected people and communities

Reliable, credible research in the field requires the routine involvement of affected people. 'Co-' methods of research production and mobilisation (co-design, co-creation, co-production) offer promising routes to impact. Capacity building in 'co' methods may require resource investment by **employers** and **funders**. Researchers should pay attention to EDI issues within 'co' models of research to ensure power imbalances and inequalities are not reproduced. 'Co-' models require evaluation. Affected people and communities may include a range of people and should be defined in a manner that is appropriate to each research project.

1.8 Utilise all forms of knowledge and a variety of research methods across to enhance EDI

Survey data and analysis of Modern Slavery PEC research reports show good levels of engagement in research among people with lived experience of exploitation and trafficking. While this raises power imbalance and ethical issues, focus group participants talked about this as a strength of modern slavery research that could be further developed to enhance EDI. For example, participants talked about the power of first-person storytelling (and how storytelling is culturally specific) and how shared stories could redress the balance of knowledge from traditional academic towards situated knowledge (knowledge embedded in the historical, cultural, linguistic, and value context of the affected person). The ways and means of better using this strength to democratise knowledge across the field and as a potential way of mobilising knowledge for improving EDI is underexplored and should be considered by **funders and researchers** alongside issues of ethical engagement and research as a site of empowerment.

Recommendations for funders and employers on EDI in the research workforce

The size, shape and diversity of the research workforce is subject to multiple external influences, many of which require systems change for better EDI outcomes (for example, reduced casualisation, more secure contracts, improved pathways to advanced academic studies, increased reward for EDI or citizenship activities in research careers). While these largely structural factors are beyond the remit of the study, there are many mid-range activities that can be progressed for improved EDI.

2.1 Building improved EDI in the workforce

Building diversity in the workforce requires drawing from a wider population of people with capacity and skills. **Funders** may wish to consider supporting bids that focus on building capacity in community and organisations that support people with lived experience through funded bilateral fellowships, secondments, internships, and placements. In addition, there was support for improving training on EDI across the research landscape. **Modern Slavery PEC** may, for example, consider designing and delivering field-appropriate EDI courses for researchers. **Researchers** and **employers** can take positive action to promote diversity in research teams (see, for example, Wellcome's Anti-Racist toolkit).

2.2 Careful specification of funding calls, job roles and clear job descriptions

Inflexible funding calls (e.g. the exclusion of third sector organisations as leaders of research bids), job descriptions (e.g. requirements for a PhD) or role profiles that do not consider EDI issues (e.g. absence of active encouragement of applications from underrepresented groups) can exclude suitable organisations, leaders and candidates from research roles. **Employers and funders** should consider their recruitment practices, and assessment criteria and adapt where necessary to encourage diversity in the field. This particularly applies to the inclusion of people with lived experience as leaders of or contributors to research teams. Funders should aspire to ensuring calls for proposals and selection criteria are made inclusive to people outside of the higher education sector.

2.3 Ensure researchers are supported to build skills in involving people with lived experience across all research topics

Some research topics (e.g., supply chains and global financial governance) may seem far removed from the everyday experience of people who have been trafficked or exploited.. **Researchers** may need support to develop skills in involvement and engagement, particularly if topics are seemingly abstract.

2.4 Continue to collect and collate routine EDI data to monitor progress.

Funders should use updated guidance on what to ask and how to ask diversity questions to ensure all relevant characteristics are captured, including more expansive ways of asking about disability and caring responsibilities (See EDIS for DAISY guidance for designing questionnaires). **Funders** should be able to show how they have used monitoring data to improve policy and practice. **Researchers** can engage with the process by providing data on diversity characteristics where they feel it is appropriate for them. **Funders** should communicate with clarity why this will help promote EDI across the research landscape.

2.5 Address an urgent need to understand and rectify issues of bullying and harassment across the researcher base.

This has been identified as an issue within academia more generally, but there may be specific opportunities for modern slavery **researchers** to discuss, develop and adopt anti-bullying policies and practices as part of an ethics-driven research agenda. At the very least, an exploration of researchers' experiences of the form and nature of negative treatment inside the modern slavery research field is required by **employers** so that action can be taken.

Recommendations on EDI in funder and employer policy and practice

3.1 Embed EDI into research systems and infrastructure

This infrastructure includes **funders** investing in and **a broad stakeholder base** participating in:

- Creating a values-driven research landscape that addresses questions of research for whom, why, how, what and where. This should directly connect to wider sector discussions about what are positive research cultures.
- Generating, by consensus, a set of EDI principles in modern slavery research, (see recommendation 1.2)
- Providing mechanisms of support (e.g., guidelines, protocols, templates, checklists and toolkits such as [Wellcome's anti-racist toolkit](#)) for the research workforce at all levels (e.g., experienced and early career researchers, research advisors, research administrators), across the full research cycle. Some of this support should be bespoke to the modern slavery field (e.g. including affected people and communities in the research cycle, developing diverse advisory panels, identifying cultural competent practice in cross-national research).

3.2 Focus on researcher training, support and improved guidance on how to embed EDI into research .

Researchers need and demand more supportive EDI training and guidance to carry out their jobs inclusively. This could be provided by both **funders** and **employers**. Some of this may be generic and drawn from other resources (e.g., how to enable open, non-threatening discussions on EDI within professional communities), some may a more bespoke approach (e.g., addressing diversity and inclusionary practice in lived experience advisory groups).

3.3 Fund research within research.

Build in EDI-oriented research within objectives for studies. For example, studies proposing reviews of literature could explicitly build in research questions on how aspects of EDI have been designed into primary studies; or studies using qualitative methods could provide insight into means of inclusive practice and how well different approaches worked. This opportunity for ‘research within research’ could be promoted more explicitly by **funders**, offering methodological insight, achieving cost efficiencies and would accelerate best practice across modern slavery research. Modern slavery research funders may wish to pioneer such initiatives as a way to accelerate the field both in terms of substantive evidence generation and methodologically.

3.4 Avoid rapid response where possible.

For example, short-deadline Modern Slavery PEC research has contributed to a several ‘scoping’ or ‘rapid response’ studies (cf. present study, Murphy et al. 2022, Such et al. 2022). Such projects are limited in the time and resources available to, for example, develop sophisticated, complex and more inclusive research designs and engage meaningfully with affected people. **Funders** may wish to reduce such calls in the interest of EDI.

3.5 Specifically, for modern slavery research funders (especially Modern Slavery PEC):

- **Routinise EDI requirements on methodological reporting in research projects:** Appendices/supplementary material provide greater EDI transparency. Reporting standardisation options are available (examples of reporting guidelines in other fields such as health sciences cf. [The Equator Network](#) are available) and drive higher standards of research in general. Adopting principles of open research should be made explicit by Modern Slavery PEC, in line with the requirements of the UK Research Councils
- **Greater support for EDI in research design:** The work of the new UKRI EDI Caucus recognises this gap in researcher support. While some support material is available (e.g. a [toolkit for Gender Equality Statements](#) for GCRF research), the suite is limited and Modern Slavery PEC may wish to consider developing bespoke materials for researchers in the modern slavery field.
- **Support and guide researchers to meet stated expectations about EDI in funding calls:** Researchers may require additional support to complete EDI statements when applying for funding or may have additional needs to make their research more inclusive. Modern Slavery PEC may wish to put support mechanisms (e.g. webinars, one-to-one support) in place.

- Reflect on and, if appropriate, **redesign the way research agendas are formed and decided upon**. Consideration of the missing topics raised in focus groups (Appendix 5) may support this task.
- **Continue with building community/NGO sector research leadership:** Capacity-development in research needs to be i) sufficiently funded, ii) supported with training or funding for it, and iii) reflected in realistic timescales to build genuine research capacity.
- **Embrace the opportunity modern slavery research, as a relatively young field, presents in leading best EDI practice in social science research:** Modern Slavery PEC is in a strong position to lead the development of a field with an explicitly EDI orientation. Commitment and action in this area may offer insight to other, more established or traditional fields of research.

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 A copy of survey questions
- Appendix 2 Search/inclusion criteria for UKRI studies. These criteria determined the selection of studies included in a dataset for analysis of diversity monitoring data
- Appendix 3 A list of studies included in the audit of Modern Slavery PEC funded studies
- Appendix 4 A list of funding organisations and academic institutions included in the documentary analysis
- Appendix 5 Suggested research agenda for improved EDI in modern slavery research
- Appendix 6 Innovations in EDI in research

Appendix 1 Survey questions

The survey was constructed using Diversity and Inclusion Survey (DAISY) Question Guidance (Version 2) (EDIS, 2022) and the Modern Slavery PEC's diversity monitoring form as guidance.

SECTION 1 Your information

AGE

What is your age?

- Up to and including 24 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- 65-74 years
- 75+ years
- Prefer not to say

DISABILITY AND LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

The following questions ask about disability and long-term conditions in different ways. Asking about disability is complex, and these questions will help us to develop a broader understanding and compare with existing statistics, as well as understand the barriers faced so we can inform those who fund modern slavery research. These questions align to the [social model](#) (rather than the medical model) of disability. Please answer each question separately and don't feel that your answer to one should determine your answer to the others

1. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

2. A) Do you experience barriers or limitations in your day-to-day activities related to any health conditions (including mental health), physical, sensory or cognitive differences?

- Yes – substantial barriers or limitations
- Yes – some/small barriers or limitations
- No

2. B) If yes, please describe what type of barriers or limitations do you face? Please describe these in whatever way works for you, some examples are included below. Please do not include any identifying information. [OPEN-ENDED QUESTION]

For example, these might include:

- Attitudinal barriers e.g. discriminatory attitudes; negative or incorrect assumptions
- Physical barriers e.g. no step free access to buildings; physical expectations of participating
- Travel or transportation barriers e.g. lack of accessible transport and accommodation
- Communications barriers e.g. lack of information in different accessible formats; lack of BSL interpretation
- Organisational barriers e.g. length of time and when meetings are scheduled limits participation
- Social barriers e.g. expectations in social interactions

RACE AND ETHNICITY

What is your ethnic group? Please select all the options that best describe your ethnicity or background E.g. you could select Black African and White British if this best reflects your identity.

Asian/Asian British

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Any other Asian background, *please describe*

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / African / Caribbean background, *please describe*

White

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Irish
- Roma
- Any other White background, *please describe*

Any other ethnic group

- Arab
- Hispanic
- Latino / Latina /Latinx
- Any other ethnic group, please describe
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background, *please describe*

NATIONALITY

What is your nationality(ies)? (Please enter 'prefer not to say' if preferred)

GENDER

Which of the following best describes your gender?

- Man

- Non-binary
- Woman
- Prefer to self-describe (*please describe*)
- Prefer not to say

Do you identify as trans?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Bi/bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Queer
- Straight/heterosexual
- Pansexual
- I identify in another way (*please describe*)
- Prefer not to say

CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Do you have any caring responsibilities? (tick all that apply)

- None
- Primary carer of a child or children (under 18)
- Joint primary carer of a child or children (under 18)
- Primary carer of a disabled child or children
- Joint primary carer of a disabled child or children
- Primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years or over)
- Joint primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years or over)
- Primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 and over)
- Joint primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 and over)
- Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)
- I have caring responsibilities but prefer not to specify what these are
- Prefer not to say

RELIGION AND BELIEF

What is your religion or strongly held belief, if any?

- No religion
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Spiritual
- Any other religion or belief (*please describe*)
- I have a religion or strongly held belief but prefer not to specify what this is
- Prefer not to say

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

1. What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about aged 14?

- **Modern professional & traditional professional occupations** such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer.
- **Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators** such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- **Clerical and intermediate occupations** such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.
- **Technical and craft occupations** such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- **Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations** such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.
- **Long-term unemployed** (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).
- **Small business owners** who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.
- Other such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know.
- I prefer not to say.

2. What type of school did you attend for the majority of your time between the ages of 11 - 16?

In the UK

- A state-run or state-funded school in the UK - Non-selective
- A state-run or state-funded school in the UK - Selective on academic, faith or other ground
- Independent or fee-paying school in the UK - where I received a means tested bursary covering 90% or more of the total cost of attending throughout my time there
- Independent or fee-paying school in the UK
- Outside the UK
- A state-run or state-funded school outside the UK - Non-selective
- A state-run or state-funded school outside the UK - Selective on academic, faith or other ground
- Independent or fee-paying school outside the UK - where I received a means tested bursary covering 90% or more of the total cost of attending throughout my time there
- Independent or fee-paying school outside the UK
- I don't know
- Prefer not to say

EXPERIENCE OF MODERN SLAVERY

Do you have lived experience of modern slavery? Lived experience means direct, personal experience of being exploited or trafficked at any time in your life.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

SECTION 2 Your role(s) in modern slavery research

IN THE LAST 10 YEARS, have you held any of the following roles in modern slavery research? Tick all that apply

- Principal or lead investigator
- Co-investigator
- Researcher employed on a project
- A manager or administrator for research projects (e.g. research support officer)
- Researcher working on a student project
- An advisor to research (i.e. a member of the public or a professional advising researchers on project design and content)

What type of organisation do you currently work for?

- Academic institution e.g. a University
- A commercial or non-profit research organisation (including thinktanks)
- Civil society or practitioner organisation (including social enterprises)
- UK government, parliamentarian or other UK policymaking organisation
- International or inter-government organisation
- Enforcement agency e.g. police, Border Force
- Business
- Legal organisation
- None – self employed
- Other (Please specify)
- Prefer not to say

Where are you currently based?

- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- North East England
- North West England
- Yorkshire and The Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- London
- South East
- South West
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

If you are a researcher, please state your career stage.

More information on these categories are available here: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/skills/>

- A PhD student
- Early career researcher (within eight years of the award of your PhD or equivalent professional training, or within six years of your first academic appointment)
- Established researcher

- Prefer not to say
- N/A
- Other – please specify

SECTION 3 Your experience of equality, diversity and inclusion in modern slavery research

Training and learning

In your role as a researcher, administrator or other contributor to research (e.g. advising researchers as a member of the public and/or a persons with lived experience), have you ever received (tick all that apply):

- On-line equality, diversity and inclusion training
- Face-to-face equality diversity and inclusion training
- Training on specific aspects of EDI e.g. race equality training, training on doing research with modern slavery persons with lived experiences (*please describe*)
- Unconscious bias training
- Cultural competency training
- Training provided by persons with lived experiences of modern slavery
- Other EDI-related training (*please describe*)

Negative experiences

In your role as a researcher or research advisor, have you ever personally experienced any of the following (tick all that apply):

- Bullying and harassment
- Microaggressions (commonplace snubs, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative attitudes towards others)
- Offensive language directed at you
- Insensitive language directed at you
- Exclusion from process of the production of research (e.g. authoring reports, papers or presentations)
- Being treated unfairly compared to others
- I have not had any negative personal experiences in my role in modern slavery research
- Other

In my view, people researching modern slavery (Responding using a Likert scale:

Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree):

Have a good understanding of what the EDI challenges are

Work in fair and equitable ways

Require more support to improve EDI in research

Improving equality, diversity and inclusion in modern slavery research

We want to identify what researchers, research administrators and contributors to research in the modern slavery field would like to see to improve EDI. If you have any ideas on what sort of things could improve EDI, please describe them here: [open ended question]

Appendix 2 Search/inclusion criteria for UKRI studies.

These criteria determined the selection of studies included in a dataset for analysis of diversity monitoring data.

Final search string with Boolean terms

"human trafficking" OR "modern slavery" OR "criminal exploitation" OR "child labour" OR "bonded labour" OR "persons with lived experience" OR "sex trafficking" OR "sexual exploitation" OR "debt bondage" OR "servitude"

Number of files returned 665

Inclusion and exclusion criteria – applied to title and abstract

Include	Exclude
Clearly relates to modern slavery and human trafficking as defined in UK law	Relates to historic slavery (e.g. Transatlantic chattel slavery)
All types of research, evaluation, innovation and knowledge exchange* activity	Entries that are extensions to projects?
Have a discrete project reference number	Entries that relate to generalised 'violence', 'trauma' or 'abuse' and not exploitation and trafficking in particular*
All UK and overseas research	Studies that focus on generalised 'organised crime' and not MSHT in particular*
Vicarious perpetrators e.g. people who view CSE online	Studies that focus on torture alone
Any time period	

Appendix 3 A list of studies included in the audit of Modern Slavery PEC funded studies

1. Addressing modern slavery in long and complex supply chains: Assessing understandings of effective supply chain governance
2. Identifying Pathways to Support British Victims of Modern Slavery towards Safety and Recovery: A Scoping Study
3. Assessing the case for a Global Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
4. Fashion Supply Chains, Modern Slavery and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Impacts, Empathy and Resilience
5. Creating Stable Futures: Human Trafficking, Participation and Outcomes for Children
6. Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act: evidence review
7. Modern Slavery Core Outcome Set: longlist of outcomes and indicators of recovery for people with lived experience of modern slavery (NB This does not include the full final research report which was published in 2023)
8. Prevention of adult sexual and labour exploitation in the UK: What does or could work?
9. The impact of Covid-19 on women workers in the Bangladesh garment industry
10. Addressing consumer awareness and (in)action towards modern slavery. Rapid research report: review of existing evidence
11. Building resilience against exploitation in Senegal and Kenya in the context of Covid-19
12. Implications of Covid-19 for modern slavery challenges in supply chain management
13. Protecting Romanian seasonal migrant workers after Covid-19. The full report is available from the Rights Lab website.
14. Forced Labour in the Malaysian Medical Gloves Supply Chain before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence, Scale and Solutions.
15. The Unequal Impacts of Covid-19 on Global Garment Supply Chains. Evidence from Ethiopia, Honduras, India, and Myanmar
16. Data for investor action on modern slavery A landscape analysis
17. Good practice in protecting people from modern slavery during the Covid-19 pandemic
18. The impacts of Covid-19 on human trafficking in Sudan
19. Access to legal advice and representation for persons with lived experiences of modern slavery
20. Precarious Labour under Lockdown: Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on displaced Syrian agricultural workers in the Middle East
21. Top 20 source non-UK countries for modern slavery in the UK
22. Effectiveness of Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act: Evidence and comparative analysis

Appendix 4 Funding organisations sampled for documentary analysis of EDI statements, strategies, action plans, evaluations and other documented activity

Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (MS-PEC) (Funded by UKRI/AHRC Strategic Priorities Fund)

Organisations that are part of Modern Slavery PEC:

- Rights Lab University of Nottingham
- Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull
- Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford
- The Alan Turing Institute
- Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law
- Centre for the Study of International Slavery, Liverpool University.

UKRI

- Includes all UK research councils, Innovate UK and Research England, including specific funding streams e.g. Newton Fund, GCRF and National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) which includes Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) and Industrial Strategy

Challenge Fund

Royal Society

British Academy

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

UK Government departments with a function that relates to modern slavery (included Home Office, Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office)

UK Government Social Research service

Scottish Funding Council

Health Care Research Wales

Wellcome Trust

Leverhulme Trust

Appendix 5 Focus group and project advisory group agenda for under-researched topics with an EDI focus

Overlooked populations in research

- Black African populations; Gypsy, Roma, Traveller populations (a perceived skewed focus on European migrants and organised criminal gangs)
- Exploitation of gay, queer or men who have sex with men; HIV as a stigma tool for exploitation

Overlooked topics and analytical lenses

- The gendered and ethnicity dimension of, for example, familial exploitation, forced marriage, domestic slavery, health and care labour exploitation (recruitment channels and debt bondage)
- Faith and spiritual belief as a risk and protective factor for modern slavery

Overlooked cultural beliefs and practices (ways of being and doing)

- For example, Witchcraft, JuJu. With the purpose that we are doing it “Not to poke into peoples’ cultures but to learn from peoples stories” (community organisation focus group participant)
- The role of shame and stigma as tools for exploitation (e.g. pregnancy, familial responsibilities, sexuality, masculinity)
- Cultural practices that heighten risk or protect people outside of the UK from being exploited in the UK, for example, the relative acceptance of paying intermediaries for employment or cultural norms around domestic work among women and girls within family networks

Inclusion of people with lived experience

- How to build EDI perspectives into research consultation and design to avoid exclusion of the voices of people with lived experience of exploitation and trafficking

Overlooked complexities

- The role of historical or intergenerational trauma in contemporary slavery e.g. exploitation of Roma people in Europe
- Experiences of racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination in the National Referral Mechanism and other modern slavery victim support systems
- The capacity of people responding to modern slavery as professionals (especially the police, first responders as well as other professions such as healthcare, social workers) to demonstrate cultural competence
- Modern slavery and human trafficking in diplomatic discourse; culturally competent framing of the problem for optimal collaboration between nations
- How to build research capacity in community organisations that serve people experiencing or at elevated risk of modern slavery
- Research as an advocacy tool for improving equity and reducing modern slavery (responding to the issue of research as a site of inclusion/voice in a hostile, unequal, exclusionary socio-political environment)
- The characteristics of 'saviourism' and what informs those ideals. How it translates into policy and practice

Some silences in the data that may also require some further exploration:

1. The issue of learning disability and neurodivergence
2. Mental health diversity (knowing that mental health is a common morbidity among persons with lived experience)
3. The differential experiences of children/older people (we did not consult with children, young people or older (beyond working age) populations in the focus groups)
4. Accessibility of outputs and knowledge mobilisation (more about accessing inputs)
5. Maternity or maternal status
6. Transgender issues and how they relate to modern slavery
7. Postcolonial critique of modern slavery research

Appendix 6. Innovations in EDI in research

Equality, diversity and inclusion in research is a dynamic and growing field in the social sciences and some funders demonstrate pioneering effort. Innovative initiatives apparent in the UK research sector include specific initiatives to address ethnic/racial inequality by adopting and developing anti-racist agendas and Research Cultures funding released by Research England have offered the sector considerable opportunities to develop and grow bespoke local approaches. A small range of examples are outlined below.

[Equitable Funding Practice Library](#)

This Wellcome supported initiative offers a full suite of supporting material to promote equitable funding. The library outlines a range of solutions approaches to EDI in funding including targeted support, process alteration and shifting power.

[Act Boldly](#). Wellcome's anti-racist principles, guidance and toolkit

This support material starts with basic anti-racist principles and provides guidance on how to put them into practice. The toolkit offers prompt questions for the research workforce throughout the research process, illustrative case studies and an anti-racism progress tracker.

[PriD3 tool](#). Improving EDI in healthcare research

This tool, generated with the support of Research England funds, is an example of how local investment into improving research cultures has generated EDI supporting tools for research. PRiD3 offers geospatial mapping of demographics to improve the diversity of sampling for research in Sheffield.

[NIHR INCLUDE](#). Bringing together inclusive research practice

INCLUDE offers an overview of potential points for intervention to improve inclusion of under-served groups across the life course of research; key objectives to improve inclusivity and guiding principles for stakeholders to apply the guidance. NIHR have also funded an [INCLUDE Ethnicity Framework](#) that helps research teams think about which ethnic groups should be included in clinical trials.

MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN RIGHTS

POLICY & EVIDENCE CENTRE

Led by the Bingham Centre

The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (Modern Slavery PEC) was created by the investment of public funding to enhance understanding of modern slavery and transform the effectiveness of law and policies designed to address it. The Centre funds and co-creates high quality research with a focus on policy impact, and brings together academics, policymakers, businesses, civil society, survivors and the public on a scale not seen before in the UK to collaborate on solving this global challenge.

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