

A unique partnership to address health inequalities

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Working with partners

The challenge: We want NICE guidance to drive real-world change and reduce unwarranted variation so patients benefit sooner.

- Working with partners **embedded in the health and care system** helps us move faster and support implementation more effectively.
- Partnerships **strengthen** our evidence base, **enhance** the quality and relevance of guidance, and **support** more equitable access to care.
- Bringing together evidence, lived experience and clinical insight ensures our recommendations translate into **meaningful, sustainable improvements** for patients.
- Our collaboration with the Race and Health Observatory shows how **the right partnership** can amplify uptake, accelerate improvement and help tackle health inequalities at scale.

Developing our approach to partnerships

We know that implementing NICE guidance is a whole-system effort, and we've been strengthening how we work with organisations across the system.

2024/25 – Building the foundations

- We started working more closely with five organisations
- Engaged widely with potential collaborators
- Captured lessons to refine our future model

2025 – Sharpening our approach

- Co-developed clear criteria for working with the right partners
- Agreed a focused shortlist based on these criteria
- Gained deeper insight through interviews with existing partners
- Developed a clearer value proposition for future collaborations

NICE

This early work ensures our partnerships are purposeful, aligned and focused on supporting more equitable implementation of NICE guidance

Our partners told us...

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Having NICE input and expertise has been invaluable.

South West London ICB

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We really value embargoed access to guidance... hugely helpful for us to prepare our summary to publish... It means we can be as helpful as possible to our audience.

WebMD

“

We see this as a strategic partnership that's of significance to us... there's a joint mission that really plays into why it's great to be working with NICE.

Health Innovation Network

This helped shape our approach for working with partners



A formalised approach to partnerships

We have moved away from ad-hoc collaboration in favour of a more structured model with clearer goals and shared priorities.

Why it matters:

- Partners can engage with confidence, knowing there is a consistent approach to collaboration, with clearer expectations and measurable outcomes.



Clearer engagement processes

We are introducing more transparent ways to engage e.g. structured timelines and consultation routes.

Why it matters:

- This will help partners plan ahead, align their activities with NICE's priorities, and avoid missed opportunities due to unclear or delayed communication.



Stronger feedback loops

We are working to show how partner inputs help shape our implementation decisions.

Why it matters:

- Our partners will feel heard and valued. It builds trust and encourages more open, honest feedback, which improves the relevance and implementability of NICE guidance.



Dedicated relationship management

We are investing time to ensure consistency points of contact and account management for priority partners.

Why it matters:

- This strengthens continuity, avoids fragmentation, and makes it easier for partners to navigate NICE and get timely support.

Why this partnership?

This partnership gives NICE access to the specialist insight, lived experience and analytical depth needed to identify where inequalities are most pronounced and where guidance may be unintentionally contributing to variation.



RHO provides real-world intelligence on how different communities experience services, which helps us test whether our recommendations work for everyone.



The partnership gives us direct, early access to equity insight when refreshing or developing guidance, something we don't always have internally.



It strengthens our ability to design practical, adoption-ready tools and resources that genuinely support those working with the people and communities most affected.



It helps us challenge blind spots, ensuring our evidence requirements and recommendations reflect diverse populations.

NICE **In short:** this partnership helps us make NICE guidance more useable, more equitable and more likely to be adopted where it matters most.

Progress so far...

Our partnership is beginning to influence how equity is considered across NICE guidance and adoption products. To date, we have:

Strengthened joint working on priority conditions



- Embedded earlier conversations on inequalities across cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental health and sickle cell.
- Used RHO intelligence to shape how we anticipate and address potential variation in practice.

Improved the visibility and clarity of equity considerations



- Refreshed our health inequalities web pages to give clearer signposting and practical messages.
- Produced more accessible communications that support wider system understanding.

Enhanced adoption support with stronger equity insight



- Co-developed the antenatal uptake and adoption toolkit with RHO challenge, feedback and lived experience insight.
- Integrated RHO perspectives into implementation advice for the Type 2 diabetes guideline update

Built a platform for ongoing improvement



- Established a trusted, repeatable model for bringing equity specialists into guidance development and implementation earlier.
- Started closing key evidence gaps and identifying opportunities for more representative data in future guidance.

What we have learnt...

... And how this shapes our wider approach to health inequalities

Equity insight needs to be 'built in' not added later



Early involvement of specialists like RHO strengthens our ability to spot potential bias, understand lived experience and shape more inclusive questions and products.

Trusted relationships accelerate change

Where partnerships are based on shared purpose and mutual respect, it becomes easier to raise difficult issues, challenge assumptions and move quickly from insight to action.



Co-producing solutions have greater traction



Working jointly on communications, implementation products and evidence gaps has shown us that co-design improves clarity, trust and adoption across diverse communities.

Focusing on shared priority areas keeps momentum

Aligning work around areas with significant inequalities (e.g., maternal and neonatal health, diabetes, CVD, mental health) enables us to embed insight across the whole guidance cycle.



Evidence gap remains a fundamental barrier



Joint work with RHO has helped us understand where evidence is weakest and how to build more representative research into future guidance and evidence standards.

Looking ahead...

As we strengthen the way equity is woven into NICE guidance and adoption support, we know real impact depends on working differently with the system. We would like your help to explore:

- The kinds of **insight, experience and perspectives** that would help us sharpen our collective focus on health inequalities.
- Where earlier collaboration or **shared problem-solving** could lead to more practical, inclusive guidance.
- The barriers or blind spots that may be **limiting equitable implementation** — and how shining a light on them could support change.
- The opportunities we have to **learn from communities**, service users and frontline practice, and what that could mean for the next phase of our work.
- How we can **continue building approaches** that support the system to deliver care that works for everyone.

