

# **INVITATION TO TENDER**

## **Evaluation of the RHO/IHI Maternal and Neonatal Learning and Action Network Programme**

**Date: July 2024**

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## About the NHS Race and Health Observatory

The NHS Race and Health Observatory (RHO) is an independent organisation, set up to identify and tackle ethnic inequalities in access to healthcare, experiences of healthcare, health outcomes, and inequalities experienced by Black, and minority ethnic members of the health and care workforce. In doing so, the RHO addresses aspirations in these areas as outlined in national healthcare policy, including those set-out in the NHS Long Term Plan. It is a proactive investigator, providing strong recommendations that inform policymaking and facilitate change. The RHO is evidence-driven and solution-focused.

The RHO is supported by NHS England and hosted by NHS Confederation. The Board and team of the RHO are independent, and it dictates its own direction and areas of focus. The RHO has three main functions:

- facilitating new, high-quality, and innovative research and evidence
- making strategic recommendations for change in policy and practice
- supporting the practical implementation of those recommendations.

The RHO is delivering the RHO/IHI Maternal and Neonatal Health Learning and Action Network (LAN) pilot programme, in partnership with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and The Health Foundation.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement

For more than 30 years, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement has used improvement science to advance and sustain better outcomes in health and health care across the world. The IHI brings awareness of safety and quality to millions, catalyses learning and the systematic improvement of care, develops solutions to previously intractable challenges, and mobilizes health systems, communities, regions, and nations to reduce harm and deaths.

The Health Foundation

The Health Foundation is an independent charitable organisation working to build a healthier UK. The Health Foundation plays a part in building a healthier nation by focusing on three key priorities: improving people's health and reducing inequalities; supporting radical innovation and improvement in health and care services; and providing evidence and analysis to improve health and care policy.

## The RHO/IHI Maternal and Neonatal Health Learning and Action Network pilot programme

Large-scale maternity and neonatal improvement programmes in England have yet to effectively address the persistent ethnic inequalities in maternal and neonatal health that see maternal mortality almost three and two times that of White women, for Black and Asian women respectively; and Black babies twice as likely as White babies to be stillborn.

The programme aims to pilot a maternal and neonatal ethnic health inequalities Quality Improvement programme with embedded anti-racism principles to: *reduce clinically avoidable severe maternal morbidity, perinatal mortality and neonatal morbidity while improving the experience of care for pregnant women and people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.*

The programme is jointly resourced by RHO, IHI and HF and the ten participating teams are working at system level, across eight Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) in four regions. The pilot programme was launched in January 2024 and the initial phase of the programme is scheduled to run for 14 months.

Teams participating in the RHO/IHI LAN pilot are applying an anti-racism-focused improvement methodology. Each team is addressing one of four clinical focus areas in which ethnic inequalities in health outcomes are evident: post-partum haemorrhage, preterm birth, gestational diabetes, and maternal mental health. Teams are applying an anti-racism lens and using the Model for Improvement framework [How to Improve: Model for Improvement | Institute for Healthcare Improvement \(ihi.org\)](#) to identify and test change ideas relating to clinical care and organisational culture.

The initial phase of the RHO/IHI LAN pilot programme consists of four two-day face-to-face learning sessions for teams, interspersed with action periods. Each action period lasts 4-5 months during which improvement work at team sites includes: tests of change through iterative plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycles; and collection of process, outcome and balancing measures. Teams are supported through monthly individual team coaching calls; monthly all-team shared learning calls; a bespoke series of five anti-racism webinars; and a bespoke series of five clinical webinars.

The aim during this pilot programme is to: develop and embed an anti-racism approach in the Learning and Action Network programme; to support teams to test interventions relating to the four clinical focus areas and specific anti-racism change ideas; and, to test bundles of clinical and anti-racism interventions at scale.

In a subsequent phase of the programme, which will be informed by this evaluation, we aim to test scale and spread of intervention bundles across and between ICS maternity and neonatal services.

## **Scope of the work**

We seek to commission an evaluation partner to help us to understand the feasibility and acceptability of an anti-racism focused improvement approach to address ethnic inequalities in maternal and neonatal health.

The evaluation partner will be expected to work with RHO and IHI teams to develop an evaluation protocol that enables us to understand contextual and implementation factors

that affect the effectiveness and scalability of interventions developed through the anti-racism focused LAN approach, to inform subsequent phases of the programme.

Evaluators would be expected to work collaboratively with the RHO and IHI teams. During this pilot programme, IHI coaches are supporting teams with contemporaneous analyses of improvement data: outcome, process and balancing measures, to iterate tests of change.

Meaningful engagement with stakeholders from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds is expected to be integral to this evaluation. The evaluation team would be expected to engage effectively with a range of stakeholders, including working in collaboration with translators, where appropriate.

Deliverables should include:

- Regular communication with the RHO/IHI LAN programme delivery team
- Contributions to the LAN internal stakeholder newsletter
- Provision of materials to support the RHO/IHI LAN team update presentations to national stakeholders.
- Production of progress reports (as outlined in 'key dates' schedule)
- Attendance and participation at quarterly evaluation oversight meetings
- Verbal interim reports to the RHO Maternal and Neonatal Health Technical Expert Group (up to three times during the evaluation period)
- A presentation of the final report to the RHO Maternal and Neonatal Advisory Group

Outputs and dissemination materials should include:

- A detailed evaluation protocol
- A final written evaluation report including an executive summary and a 'plain English' summary. The report will be for external publication.

## **Tender submission**

Your tender submission should be organised under the following headings:

Parts 1-4 of the tender submission should be no more than 4 A4 pages (no less than 11point font). Supporting evidence should be provided as an annexe.

- 1. Contact details for the Organisation(s)**  
**Name and contact details of the lead applicant**
- 2. Project plan to include:**

- An introduction illustrating your understanding of the brief, and of the role that race and racism play in determining differential experience and outcomes.
- A summary of your proposed methodology, including details of the framework/theory you plan to use and of your proposed approach to community engagement.
- Details of how you plan to work with partners, including the IHI team, to facilitate iterative improvement. A detailed timetable for carrying out the work, highlighting key milestones, deadlines, suggested meetings and progress reports.
- Details of the evaluation team (with CVs / biographies in an annex) and their role in the evaluation
- Evidence of record in evaluating similar projects in this field
- Plans for reporting and dissemination
- Management arrangements for the evaluation
- An indication of how much input and capacity would be required from the Observatory and IHI teams.
- Details of key personnel who will be involved in the project.
- Key risks and mitigating actions for the project

**3. Fee proposal to include:**

- Costings for the work including VAT.
- A detailed budget covering both personnel costs and any non-pay expenses.
- The costs of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.

**4. Company information to include:**

- A brief outline your values, structure, size, and capabilities in general.
- Detail of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.
- An explanation of the unique benefit you will bring to this work.
- Details of how you propose to ensure GDPR compliance, as appropriate.

**5. Supporting Evidence to include:**

- Examples of at least two similar evaluation tenders you have won and delivered.
- The details of two previous clients (preferably not for profit) that we can contact for reference purposes (references will be taken up for shortlisted applicants.)
- At least two examples of written reports produced by the intended primary author(s). Any written outputs from this project will be expected to meet the standard of provided examples.

- A completed equalities questionnaire (see schedule 1).

## 6. Detailed specifications

- The initial evaluation period will be 12 months from the date of award, to include write up and submission of final report. Longer periods may be considered if justification for the longer timescale can be provided.
- The final report will be for external publication by the NHS Race and Health Observatory, using the Observatory branding, but also including the logo of the contracted organisation.
- We welcome bids up to £150,000 - £200, 000 (exclusive of VAT). Value for money for the Observatory will be considered when scoring bids, and higher value bids may be considered if adequate justification can be given for the additional amount.

## Selection criteria

We will rank tenders on the basis of:

1. Overall fit to requirements of the brief and proposed methods.
2. A proven track record of impactful high-quality evaluation of complex interventions.
3. Relevant experience of team, including mixed methods research, a demonstration of cultural competence, and an ability to engage with issues around ethnic health inequality and racism.
4. Value for money to the Observatory.
5. Your approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

## Key Dates

ITT released	10th July 2024
Deadline for bids	16th August 2024
Potential follow-up interviews	Week commencing 30th Sept 2024
Contract awarded	October 2024
Interim report	March 2025
Draft full report	July 2025
Final report	Sept 2025

## Instructions for the return of the tenders

**Tenders should be submitted by email to: [tenderbids@nhsrho.org](mailto:tenderbids@nhsrho.org)**

Tender ref: RHO\_LANEVAL2024

Please contact Nandi Simpson via [tenderbids@nhsrho.org](mailto:tenderbids@nhsrho.org) if you would like a pre-submission conversation.

Tenders must be received by end of 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Tenders received after this date will not be considered.

It is incumbent on tenders to ensure they have all of the information required for the preparation of their tenders.

### **Further information about this tender can be obtained from:**

Name	<b>Dr Nandi Simpson</b>
Title	Director, Implementation (NHS RHO)
Email address	<a href="mailto:tenderbids@nhsrho.org">tenderbids@nhsrho.org</a>



## Schedule 1- Equalities questionnaire

This questionnaire must be completed satisfactorily in order for any company to be considered to tender for this NHS Confederation contract. In most cases, references to legislation below refer to the Equality Act 2010.

1. Is it your policy as an employer and as a service provider to comply with your statutory obligations under the equality legislation, which applies to Great Britain, or equivalent legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff?

Yes                      No

2. Accordingly, is it your practice not to discriminate directly or indirectly in breach of equality legislation which applies in Great Britain and legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff:

- In relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer and promote employees?

Yes                      No

- In relation to delivering services?

Yes                      No

3. Do you have a written equality policy?

Yes                      No

4. Does your equality policy cover:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal?

Yes                      No

- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment making it clear that these are disciplinary offences?

Yes                      No

- Identify the senior position for responsibility for the policy and its effective implementation?

Yes                      No

5. Is your policy on equality set out:

- In documents available and communicated to employees, managers, recognised trade unions or other representative groups?

Yes                      No

- In recruitment advertisements or other literature?

Yes                      No

- In materials promoting your services?

Yes                      No

Please evidence all questions.

If you answered NO to any part of questions 4 or 5 can you provide (and if so, please do) other evidence to show how you promote equalities in employment and service delivery.

6. In the last three years, have any findings of unlawful discrimination been made against your firm by the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal or any other court or in comparable proceedings in any other jurisdiction?

Yes                      No

7. In the last three years, has any contract with your organisation been terminated on grounds of your failure to comply with:

- Legislation prohibiting discrimination; or

Yes                      No

- Contract conditions relating to equality in the provision of services

Yes                      No

8. In the last three years, has your firm been the subject of formal investigations by the Equality and Human Rights Commission or a comparable body, on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination?

Yes                      No

9. If the answer to question 6 and 7 is YES, or, in relation to question 8, a finding adverse to your organisation has been made, what steps have you taken as a result of that finding? Please summarise the details below and provide full details as an attachment.

10. If you are not currently subject to UK employment law, please supply details of your experience in complying with equivalent legislation that is designed to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. List any attached documents.

## **Guidance in answering the equality questionnaire**

When completing the questionnaire, all companies must answer each question fully and supply any documentary evidence requested. Failure to fully answer each question or failure to submit any documentary evidence required may lead the NHS Confederation to consider the answer unsatisfactory.

### **Question 1 and 2**

If your firm has implemented an effective equality policy, you will be able to answer yes to these questions. You will be able to confirm your answers by submitting your equality policy and supporting evidence as for as part of this section.

### **Question 3 and 4**

You will need to submit a copy of your firm's equality policy. You will need to ensure that your policy covers:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal
- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment
- Identifies the senior position responsibly for the policy

### **Question 5**

Documents available and method of communication to staff. You will be required to submit examples of any documents, which explain your firm's policies in respect of recruitment, selection, remuneration, training and promotion outside of the equality policy asked for in Question 3 and 4.

You will also need evidence of how your firm has communicated this document to staff i.e. notice boards or issue individual employees with a copy. There is no prescribed evidence here. You will need to submit whatever documents your firm uses for these purposes.

In recruitment advertisements or other literature, you will need to submit evidence that makes public your firm's commitment to equality in employment and service delivery.

Small firms may not have detailed procedures, but you must ensure that evidence is provided which demonstrates that personnel operate in accordance with a written equality policy that includes:

- Open recruitment practices such as using job centres and local newspapers to advertise vacancies
- Instructions about how the firm ensures that all job applicants are treated fairly.

In material promoting your services This relates to how your firm provides information in materials promoting your services e.g. in different languages, making information accessible to people with hearing and visual impairment and physical access for disabled users.

### **Question 6**

This question's concern is whether any court or industrial tribunal has found your firm guilty of unlawful discrimination in the last three years. It is important to be honest with your answers. The NHS Confederation may check your responses. If the answer is yes, you may wish to insert additional information which details the actions your firm has undertaken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

Answering yes will not automatically mean that you do not get the contract; you need to ensure that the NHS Confederation feels confident that you have sufficient measures put in place to prevent a re-occurrence.

#### **Question 7**

This question's concern is whether your firm has ever had a contract terminated for noncompliance with equality legislation or equality contract conditions. If the answer is yes, your firm may wish to submit additional information which details the actions they have taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

#### **Question 8**

This question asks whether your firm has had any investigation carried out, whatever the outcome. The NHS Confederation can check a contractor's answer from lists that the CRE and EOC produce, so please be honest. The NHS Confederation is aware that because a firm has been investigated does not mean that it is guilty of discrimination. The result of the investigation will be taken into account when assessing your firm's answers to the questionnaire.

#### **Question 9**

If your firm has been found guilty of unlawful discrimination, you will need to provide evidence that details the steps your firm has taken to correct the situation. The Court, Industrial Tribunal or CRE will have made recommendations about steps your firm should take to eliminate the discrimination. If no action or inadequate action has been taken in this respect, only then will your firm be considered refusal onto the tender list.

#### **Question 10**

If your firm is not subject to UK employment law you must ensure that you supply details of equivalent legislation that you adhere to.