

Showcasing our work to breakdown barriers

# TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES



# Foreword

**We are delighted to showcase some of the incredible projects underway across King's services that are aimed at addressing disparities in access, experience and outcomes for our diverse local communities.**

Significant health inequalities exist across our communities in South East London and we know that these have only increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing them is a key priority for King's. To achieve our ambitions, we know we need to embed our commitment to tackling these inequalities at all levels. Consequently, we have established a Trust-wide programme of activity that aims to drive forward local and national priorities in this area.

The projects we outline here are being led by individual care groups and departments at King's, which have taken a proactive approach to addressing identified barriers to equity for minoritised and under-represented groups.

By taking a proactive role in addressing health inequalities, we can – and will – make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of all our patients and local communities.



**Leonie Penna**, Chief Medical Officer and **Nicholas Campbell Watts**, Non-Executive Director – Health Inequalities Programme Sponsors

This resource was compiled by Simon O'Donoghue, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Patients and Communities, and Shivonne Simpson, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, with the support of the Health Inequalities Programme Team.

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# 1. Breast Cancer Collaborative – To improve the explanation of diagnostic test results in a completely understandable way for adult cancer patients in ethnically diverse communities

**Care group/department:** Cancer Network

**Location:** King's College Hospital, Trust-wide

**Project:** Breast Cancer Collaborative – To improve the explanation of diagnostic test results in a completely understandable way for adult cancer patients in ethnically diverse communities

**Leads:** Irina Belun-Vieira and Sola Banjo

**Aim:** Improve the experience of the Black African patients at Denmark Hill and Asian patients at the Princess Royal University hospital, with suspected breast cancer, at the time of referral to the breast one stop clinic.

## Overview

The project team identified a number of priority improvement areas, such as: developing resources to enhance patients' understanding of their diagnostic test results, increasing access to translation and nursing support, and raising awareness of cultural differences to enable access to care.

Thirty women from minority ethnic backgrounds were invited to take part in a series of focus group discussions and surveys. The women shared their experiences in a supportive environment and helped the team with the design of improvement initiatives around their lived experience of using King's services.

## What has been achieved?

This project has led to King's Breast Cancer Clinics making significant changes to the way they communicate with patients – including referral letters and web pages – to make them more inclusive of minority ethnic patients and those whose first language is not English. A flowchart has also been developed to explain to patients what they can expect from the point of referral up until they receive their diagnostic test results.

To increase awareness of cultural differences among the Trust's breast cancer patient populations, the project team has launched a staff training video which showcases feedback from patients who took part in this project.



The project team has completed 44 follow-up interviews with patients since the implementation of these resources. The feedback has shown a significant improvement in patients' experience of King's Breast Cancer Clinics, as well as highlighting how the service can be further improved.



**"We hope our film will give more patients a voice and ensure we deliver services and individualised care that meets everyone's needs."**

**Irina Belun-Vieira,  
Head of Nursing Cancer**



**"Feedback from patients and other NHS trust teams on the video has been really positive. We have a clear drive to ensure we get this right for our patients."**

**Sola Banjo, Cancer Quality  
Improvement Manager**



## 2. Increasing compliance with pre- and post-operative instructions in patients having sedation for oral surgery

**Care group/department:** Dental

**Location:** King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

**Project:** Increasing compliance with pre- and post-operative instructions in patients having sedation for oral surgery

**Lead:** Dr Harjit Tagar

**Aim:** To develop an animated film that increases understanding and reinforces crucial information in patients having sedation in preparation for oral surgery.

### Overview

**Dr Tagar wanted to reduce health inequalities resulting from low health literacy.**

Patients attending for dental treatment under intravenous sedation were frequently found to be ill prepared, having not fully understood verbal and written instructions provided to them at consultation. This often resulted in treatment being postponed or patients being offered treatment under local anaesthetic, without the anxiety relieving benefits of sedation. Low health literacy was therefore acting as a driver of health inequalities by creating disparities in access to care.

She developed a short animated film which is viewed by patients who are due to undergo sedation for dental surgery. It shows them and/or their chaperones what to expect when they attend for treatment and how to prepare in a simple, understandable way.



**“Providing information that is accessible and understandable is crucial for ensuring equitable experiences for all our patients.”**

**Dr Harjit Tagar,**  
Consultant in Oral Surgery



## **What has been achieved?**

The **‘Dental Sedation – Information for Patients’** animation – which also comes with an accompanying leaflet – was launched in 2019 and is proving successful at King’s and elsewhere, having been viewed 65,000 times online to date.

It can be accessed via King’s website and on YouTube via a QR code, is easy to understand and features characters that mirror the diversity of King’s staff and patient population. It has been praised by patients, staff and the wider dental community and has also won a British Association of Oral Surgeons award.



### 3. Delivering Special Care Dentistry

**Care group/department:** Dental

**Location:** King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

**Project:** Delivering Special Care Dentistry

**Leads:** Equality Diversity and Inclusion Leads:  
Dr Charlotte Curl and Dr Julie Edwards,  
Clinical Lead: Dr Sobia Rafique

**Aim:** To reduce inequalities for patients with additional needs.

#### Overview

**All patients using this service have additional needs, which could take the form of a learning, sensory, physical, mental, social or medical disability. Reducing inequalities for these patients is part of the core mission being delivered by the Special Care Dentistry team.**

The service also works closely with Community Dental Services in South London, which provide treatment in patients' homes and from a mobile dental van. It is also part of the team creating an Integrating Mental and Physical healthcare: Research, Training and Services (IMPARTS) assessment tool for dental patients with learning disabilities.



## What has been achieved?

The team continually reviews its approach and implements adjustments to accommodate the needs of all vulnerable patients, to remove access barriers and to enable them to have timely, good quality dental treatment. Among the many examples, the service is the only one in London that sedates anxious patients with challenging behaviour and/or mental health issues prior to general anaesthetic at home and transfers them to the Day Surgery Unit in a sedated state by ambulance.

The service has recently become part of the clinical governance pathway for mental health patients so patients from across all South East and West London boroughs can now access it. It is also a tertiary centre for patients from further afield.



From left to right  
Dr Charlotte Curl, Dr Julie Edwards and Dr Sobia Rafique

**“We have spent our careers breaking down barriers and empowering patients to receive good quality dental care.”**

**Dr Charlotte Curl, Consultant in Special Care Dentistry and Dental Care Group Patient Safety & Governance Lead**



### 4. Enhancing health outcomes in sickle cell patients treated in the Emergency Department (ED)

**Care group/department:** Emergency Medicine

**Location:** King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

**Project:** Enhancing health outcomes in sickle cell patients treated in the Emergency Department (ED)

**Lead:** Dr Subarna Chakravorty

**Aim:** To improve the experience of sickle cell patients who receive ED treatment and their health outcomes

#### Overview

**Sickle Cell is a condition that predominantly affects people of African or Caribbean heritage.**

A 2018 survey of King's paediatric sickle cell patients and their parents indicated that they had a range of issues concerning their experience of care, particularly when accessing emergency acute services. These findings were compounded by the conclusions of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia (SCTAPPG) report, '**No One's Listening**'. This called on NHS providers to take urgent action to address the barriers it had identified, which are often driven by unconscious bias and lead to inequitable health outcomes.



## What has been achieved?

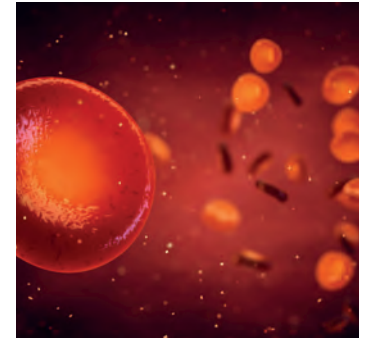
King's Haematology Team has taken a range of actions in response to the survey and report. These include reviewing pathways for sickle cell patients to improve their treatment and experience.

The Haematology team has also focused on improving staff education about sickle cell. It has worked with patients to produce several staff training videos in which the patients themselves get to share their experiences of ED treatment and recommend ways in which it can be improved.



**“We want all patients living with sickle cell to have better quality lives but also to reduce distress for patients and families when accessing unplanned medical interventions.”**

**Dr Subarna Chakravorty,  
Consultant Paediatric  
Haematologist**





### 5. Making the Trust more accessible to all

**Care group/department:**

Patient and Public Involvement Team

**Location:** Trust-wide**Project:** Making the Trust more accessible to all**Lead:** Lucy Hamer**Aim:** To improve access across all Trust sites by involving people with lived experience of access and communication needs to shape the development of King's estates and services

#### Overview

**King's Patient and Public Accessibility Advisory Group was established in April 2021 to work with patients, carers, King's Members and local voluntary organisations to make the Trust more accessible.**

It enables people with lived experience of access and communication needs to shape the development of King's estates and services with the support of existing legislation and based on good practice guidance on physical access, wayfinding and the Accessible Information Standard (AIS).

## What has been achieved?

In the past 12 months, the group has provided invaluable insights on a range of projects at all Trust hospital sites.

This includes the development of signage, wayfinding and staff training, and advising on requirements for the physical space in the new outpatient building at King's Denmark Hill site.

The Trust has a wide range of ongoing accessibility programmes and projects that the group will continue to support by providing its knowledge and expertise.



**"Our advisory group is an invaluable resource in helping us to better understand how we can make King's accessible to all our patients."**

**Lucy Hamer, Patient and Public Involvement Team**



### 6. Diabetes transition and young adult care pilot

**Care group/department:** Planned Medicine

**Reach/location:**

King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

**Project:** Diabetes transition and young adult care pilot

**Lead:** Kate Hunt

**Aim:** Improve access to diabetes care for young adults of Black and Asian ethnicity

#### Overview

**In Southwark, 60% of young people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes are of Black ethnicity and 10% are of Asian ethnicity. They are also much more likely to live in areas with higher levels of social deprivation.**

There are currently no services in South East London specifically designed to meet the needs of young people with the condition.

King's Diabetes team has acquired funding for an 18-month pilot aimed at improving care for young adults with type 1 or 2 diabetes by devising a programme framework that can be rolled out across South East London and beyond.

A specialist dietitian has been recruited who will drive the design, pilot and implementation of the programme, which will be co-designed with young people living with diabetes in the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark.

## What has been achieved?

By improving access to diabetes care for young adults of Black and Asian ethnicity, the project aims to reduce the incidence of associated health problems which can have severe, long-term damaging effects.



**“Most diabetes support programmes are designed with older age groups in mind. They are simply not appropriate for many young people as their needs are often completely different.”**

**Dr Kate Hunt, Consultant in Diabetes and General Medicine, King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Consultant in Diabetes, Bromley Healthcare**







### 7. Equitable care at the end of life for all ethnicities

**Care group/department:** Palliative Care

**Reach/location:**

Trust-wide, nationally and internationally

**Project:**

Equitable care at the end of life for all ethnicities

**Lead:** Dr Sabrina Bajwah

**Aim:** To ensure that all patients admitted to the Trust and their families – whatever their ethnicity – are fully informed about COVID-19 to alleviate fear and distress

#### Overview

The lack of information about COVID-19 symptoms caused elevated levels of fear and distress for patients and their families admitted to the Trust. This was particularly marked for its ethnically diverse patient cohort and even more so for patients whose first language was not English.

King's Palliative Care team wanted to ensure that patients receiving end of life care – and their relatives and carers – were better informed to avoid distress. Working with the European Lung Foundation and several translation companies, the team rapidly co-developed COVID-19 factsheets, which have now been translated in 25 languages.





**“Through our COVID-19 factsheets we have highlighted the need to consider the communication needs of those from ethnically diverse groups. We have tailored our resources to ensure they are accessible for patients of all ethnicities, ensuring equitable care. We are delighted that this project was shortlisted for a prestigious NHS Race Equality Award in 2022.”**

**Dr Sabrina Bajwah,  
Consultant in Palliative  
Medicine**

## **What has been achieved?**

The factsheets are now used routinely to improve the end-of-life care delivered locally, nationally and internationally and have been downloaded over 13,000 times from the [European Lung Foundation’s website](#).

The team has also led the first service evaluation examining associations between ethnicity, socioeconomic deprivation and access to palliative care. The disseminated findings have supported palliative care services in reducing racial inequality in service delivery.



KCH Palliative Care Team



### 8. Health inequalities in kidney disease – meeting the urgent need to identify early disease in high risk communities (HIDDEN-CKD): a feasibility study

**Care group/department:**

Renal and Urology/Therapies

**Reach/location:** Trust-wide

**Project:** Health inequalities in kidney disease – meeting the urgent need to identify early disease in high risk communities (HIDDEN-CKD): a feasibility study

**Lead:** Dr Kate Bramham

**Aim:** To improve access to renal care for high risk communities to reduce the incidence of severe kidney disease

#### Overview

Severe kidney disease can be prevented if it is identified early as treatment works better when the disease has not progressed too far. Although people of any background and all ages can get kidney disease, those from African and Afro-Caribbean communities are five times more likely to be diagnosed with the condition.

King's Renal and Urology support **HIDDEN-CKD**, a specialist healthcare service for people of African and Afro-Caribbean heritage that engages and educates communities about risk factors and provides free screening.

## What has been achieved?

The project currently has 10 community kidney champions who have already delivered several engagement events to raise awareness about kidney health. They aim to have administered more than 600 screening tests in the community by April 2023.

If additional funding is acquired, the programme will be expanded geographically and to other minority ethnic groups.



Group session



Roseline Agyekum, Rachel Musomba, Dr Kate Bramham, Kathryn Griffiths, Neerja Jayne, Thaddaeus Brown



**“Promoting kidney health awareness directly with high risk communities is ensuring higher levels of engagement and will reduce the disparity in outcomes over the long-term.”**

**Dr Kate Bramham, Clinical Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Nephrologist**



### 9. Development of Black and minority ethnic (BME) patient-centred dietary resources to improve hyperkalaemia in chronic kidney disease (CKD)

#### Care group/department:

Renal and Urology/Therapies (Dietetics)

#### Reach/location:

Trust-wide; nationally and internationally

**Project:** Development of Black and minority ethnic (BME) patient-centred dietary resources to improve hyperkalaemia in chronic kidney disease (CKD)

**Lead:** Deepa Kariyawasam

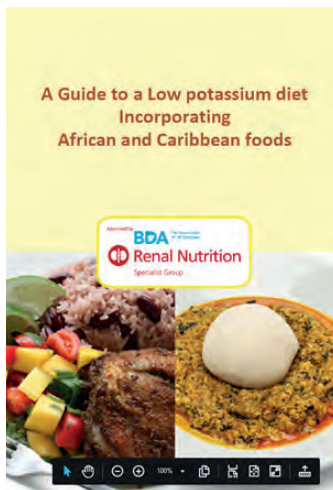
**Aim:** To improve advice for dietitians and for patients from multicultural backgrounds on a low potassium diet

#### Overview

**Hyperkalaemia – a life threatening condition that can lead to emergency hospital admission – is caused by abnormal levels of potassium.**

Patients at risk of hyperkalaemia need to eat a low potassium diet. The dietary advice resources available lack information about multicultural foods and yet 18.7% of all patients on dialysis in the UK are from non-white ethnic backgrounds (50% in London).

In 2019, a team of seven dietitians – led by King's specialist renal dietitian – worked with patients and people with lived experience, to develop a set of four dietary patient resources for African and Caribbean, Eastern European, Far Eastern and South Asian diets. The dietitians also produced an accompanying booklet for dietetic professionals, to help increase understanding of how to advise on low potassium diet in a multicultural context.



## What has been achieved?

The dietary resources have proved to be valuable for patients and dietitians and are now used across UK services and internationally. They won an International (USA) Kidney X Patient Innovator Award and the NHS Parliamentary Award for the London Region on Health Equities. They have also been nominated for a NICE Shared Learning Award.

**"It's important that the nutritional advice we provide to patients is culturally appropriate and provided in a way that it relevant to them"**

**Deepa Kariyawasam,  
Specialist Renal Dietitian**



### 10. Spanish parent education in maternity services

**Care group/department:** Women's Health

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**Reach/location:** Trust-wide

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**Project:**  
Spanish parent education in maternity services

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**Lead:** Octavia Wiseman

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**Aim:** To improve access to parent education for Spanish speakers to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes

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#### Overview

Many migrant women report negative experiences of maternity care and are known to experience disproportionately poor maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Women's Health rolled out the Taller Prenatal project in April 2014 to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking patients, by providing Spanish-language parent education drop-in sessions facilitated by Spanish-speaking midwives.

#### What has been achieved?

Since launch, almost 500 Spanish-speaking women and 200 partners have attended the classes.





Antenatal class for Spanish mums with Community Midwife Octavia Wiseman (seated, holding baby)

A WhatsApp group for Spanish-speaking mothers has also been set up and everyone who comes to the parent education classes is invited to join. The group has become a link between health services and the Spanish-speaking community and it has also been used to disseminate public health information.

The project was shortlisted for a Health Service Journal (HSJ) award for communication. The project team was invited to present its work at the 2016 European Midwives Education Conference and it was also shortlisted for the Royal College of Midwives' Award for reducing inequalities in 2018.



**"The service has had made a real difference in improving access to information and services for our local Spanish speaking communities."**

**Octavia Wiseman,  
Community Midwife**



# 11. Increasing the participation of Black and Black mixed heritage women in antenatal education

**Care group/department:** Women's Health

**Reach/location:** Trust-wide

**Project:** Increasing the participation of Black and Black mixed heritage women in antenatal education

**Lead:** Dawn Litchmore

**Aim:** To educate Black and Black mixed heritage women about pregnancy risk factors, encourage access to further antenatal education and empower participants to make informed choices about their care

## Overview

**Inequalities in access, experience and outcome for women from certain minority ethnic backgrounds in maternity services are well documented. To address these inequalities, a service improvement project has been developed as part of the CapitalMidwife Ethnic Minority Midwives Fellowship.**

The education workshop for Black and Black mixed heritage women has been designed around the recommendations of the 2022 **'Black Maternity Experience'** report and the responses received from an antenatal service users survey. The face to face workshop has since been established as part of the parent education portfolio for King's antenatal services.



Attendees of the workshop are encouraged to access further education to help them feel empowered to make informed choices about their individualised care plans, while being provided with support and networking opportunities.

## What has been achieved?

Workshop attendees have welcomed the opportunity to discuss what they have heard on social media and in different news outlets, often highlighting that they did not realise it was OK to ask questions or did not know how to seek additional support.

Women who attend are encouraged to get involved with King's Maternity Voice Partnership to help shape and improve services.

The team is monitoring the impact of attendance on uptake of wider antenatal classes and other workshops, as well as longer term outcomes.



**"I hope this work will build more trust in our services and encourage this group of women to feel confident to ask questions and get more involved in their care."**

**Dawn Litchmore, CapitalMidwife Fellow**

King's College Hospital Maternity  
PARENT EDUCATION FACE-TO-FACE

**NEW BLACK AND BLACK MIXED HERITAGE ANTENATAL EDUCATION, SUPPORT & NETWORKING**

Black women are 3.7 x more likely to die during pregnancy and birth and are more likely to have a severe pregnancy complication compared to white women (MBRRACE-UK Report 2022, The Black Maternal Experience Report 2022)

This group will meet in person at a midwifery clinic location near to King's College Hospital - Denmark Hill. Please check individual listings for details

Scan the QR code to get the NHS Maternity linkbox

For more information  
Tel: 020 7608 2222  
www.kings.nhs.uk



# 12. Minimising delay in the assessment for and treatment of malignancy in vulnerable patients including those with mental health conditions or addiction

### Care group/department:

Adult Specialty Medicine/Respiratory

**Reach/location:** King's College Hospital,  
Trust-wide; South East London

**Project:** Minimising delay in the assessment for and treatment of malignancy in vulnerable patients including those with mental health conditions or addiction

**Lead:** Dr Laura-Jane Smith

**Aim:** To improve access to assessment for and treatment of malignancy in vulnerable patients

## Overview

Vulnerable patients with severe mental illness and substance addiction often find it difficult to complete the urgent investigations needed to make a diagnosis and access treatment on a cancer pathway. The project team, which includes clinicians from King's, Guy's and St Thomas' and members of the South East London Cancer Alliance (SELCA), wanted to replicate a successful project for head and neck cancer patients and to minimise delays in access to treatment for lung cancer patients.



## What has been achieved?

A specialist lung oncology community psychiatric nurse (CPN) has been recruited who will provide personalised, flexible support to enhance engagement for patients with severe mental illness and substance addiction. The aim is to increase the number of patients accessing both curative and palliative treatment on shorter pathways.

Key metrics have been identified and the cancer pathways, which are complex and multisite, have been mapped. The CPN will now look to build relationships with people in the lung oncology teams across South East London, while collecting and analysing data on outcomes for patients with severe mental illness or substance dependence on the lung cancer pathway.

They will provide personalised support for patients and collect data on pathway duration, did not attend (DNA), frequency to clinic and investigations, and treatment uptake. The team hope to demonstrate that the role can close the gap and mitigate inequalities to access in lung cancer services for vulnerable patients.



**“Being referred to a suspected cancer pathway is a stressful time for anyone. A more personalised approach and enhanced contact for those with severe mental illness or substance addiction will be crucial in mitigating barriers to access.”**

**Dr Laura-Jane Smith,  
Consultant Respiratory  
Physician**



## 13. Inclusivity and Accessibility working group

**Care group/department:** Sexual Health

**Reach/location:**

King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

**Project:** Inclusivity and accessibility working group

**Leads:** Mana Hotta and Dr Grace Childs

**Aim:** To improve access to sexual health services for clients from minoritised and under-represented groups

### Overview

The Inclusivity and Accessibility working group at The Havens was set up in spring 2021 to improve access and provision for clients from minoritised and under-represented groups.

A network of 'champion' groups has since been formed across different disciplines that reflects Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics:

- Race, ethnicity and culture
- LGBTQIA+ and gender (with particular attention to male and non-binary access)
- Religion and spirituality
- Neurodiversity and other abilities
- Domestic violence and abuse.

Each group is tasked with developing a knowledge base and to advocate about issues affecting minoritised communities and under-represented groups within the Havens, including co-creation of an up-to-date internal library of resources to support inclusive practices.

### What has been achieved?

The forum has opened up important and meaningful discussions around creating a supportive environment for staff and the development of a shared vision for the reduction of health inequalities for the Havens' clients.



**“The group provides a regular opportunity to consider barriers to access for under-represented groups and develop initiatives to enable an inclusive and welcoming service.”**

**Mana Hotta and Dr Grace Childs**



## King's Health Inequalities Programme

In autumn 2022, we launched our Trust-wide programme of activity aimed at tackling health inequalities, which will play a key part in helping us achieve the ambitions set out in our Roadmap to Inclusion (2022-2024).

The programme is mapped against our BOLD vision and the commitments made in our 'Strong Roots, Global Reach' strategy and is the product of engagement with colleagues and communities across the South East London Integrated Care System. Through this process, we identified three core priority areas that are underpinned by three golden threads. We have organised these priorities into a working group structure overseen by a Steering Group with executive level sponsorship:

- **Operationalising the Vital 5:** Play our part in addressing five of the key health issues common across South East London ('the Vital 5') – reducing body mass index (BMI) and harmful drinking, stopping smoking, controlling blood pressure, and identifying and improving poor mental health.

### Find out more

For more information about any of these projects or King's Trust-wide Health Inequalities programme, please contact our Programme Team: [kch-tr.healthinequalities@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.healthinequalities@nhs.net)

- **Research Health Inequalities:** Increase diversity in the way we carry out research studies and trials.
- **Developing a Health Inequalities Dashboard:** Develop a health inequalities dashboard to tell us where improvements need to be made in our services, across our hospitals and in our communities.

