

EDICa



EDICa Newsletter - May-June '23

EDI Caucus: Supporting UK Research & Innovation with evidence-based reviews of equality, diversity & inclusion practices.

Not everyone likes the moving graphics of the software we're using for the newsletter - e.g. some autistic people. If you would like a static PDF version of the newsletter, please click here

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Newsletter/2023-06>

The newsletter will always be written in plain English however if you would like a version summarised in British Sign Language, please reach out to us so that we can gauge the need for this. In the meantime, please do have a look on the EDICa website where you will see an overview of EDICa objectives in BSL.

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Introduction to EDICa

The EDI Caucus (EDICa) is an interdisciplinary network of researchers and practitioners funded by a £3.4 million grant from UK Research and Innovation and the British Academy to accelerate equity across the research and innovation (R & I) ecosystems in the UK through the creation of evidence bases, commissioning research projects and piloting interventions.

The EDICa team consists of 18 investigators from eight organisations. We are researchers at different career stages from across a range of disciplines and lived experiences of marginalisation.

The project will span 3 years, and is centred around three thematic workstreams:

1. **The career-life cycle:** Identifies the relationships between key career and life events and their mutual impacts, making recommendations for reducing barriers to inclusion across the career.
2. **The research process:** Determines how EDI can be embedded in the research process and increase the diversity literacy of researchers.
3. **The organisation of work:** Identifies how work can be organised in a variety of research workplaces to create enabling workspaces.

Here are some of the ways EDICa will achieve its objectives:

- Identify gaps in existing research and subsequently share recommendations on EDI practice and policy.
- Co-design the research process with stakeholders (such as universities, early career researchers, research funders, innovation sector researchers, public sector researchers, individuals with lived experience and advocacy groups).
- Co-create research workspaces with partners, such as National Museums of Scotland.
- Build communities of practice to continue work beyond the 3 year grant.
- Use a £1m Flexible Fund to commission research that addresses gaps identified in the Delphi study and through evidence reviews.
- Share findings through a strategic dissemination plan, to reach as broad an audience as possible.
- Internships for people underrepresented in the R&I sector offer experience of a sector they might not have considered before.

To find out more about our team of Investigators, Researchers and Management as well as project updates, visit our website: <https://disc.hw.ac.uk/about-edica/>

To find out more about our internship, visit our website: <https://disc.hw.ac.uk/edica-internships/>

Flexible Fund Call

We will shortly be announcing the first round of the Flexible Fund, which will support projects to accelerate equity across the research and innovation ecosystem. We anticipate the first round focusing on mitigating the impact of Covid-19 and will particularly welcome applications from traditionally marginalised researchers and those which embed co-design.

Call for reviewers: We are looking for individuals to review applications in this round of funding. We welcome reviewers who are academics (at all career stages, from PGR onwards), non-academics and researchers and innovators across all sectors, with experience in reviewing and with a background in the areas of research that this call will focus on.

If you are interested in being part of the Flexible Fund reviewing process, please contact us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk.

More information will be shared in the near future, so make sure you sign up to our [newsletter](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and check our [website](#) for updates.

Co-Design - the Delphi Study

Co-design was central to EDICa's funding proposal. To kickstart the EDICa project, we recruited a small group of experts to participate in a Delphi study. This is a well-established approach to getting a consensus view of experts on what are the core issues EDICa should focus on. We have completed the first round with lots of different ideas and key themes emerging. A second round of the Delphi study is under way, which will be followed by workshops with participants. We will be using the results of the study to inform future projects and the research EDICa undertakes, as well as influencing future Flexible Fund calls.

We will be publishing our findings from the Delphi study later in the year and will be sharing them across our communication platforms.

Workstream Updates

The Career - Life Cycle

In this workstream, we aim to identify relationships between key career and life events and their mutual impacts, making recommendations for reducing barriers to inclusion and creating accessible workplaces across the research and innovation system.

The initial research in this workstream is on menstrual health including perimenopause and menopause. This is a topic still under a heavy stigma in the western world and usually treated with silence and an assumption that everyone's experience fits the norm. It is still poorly understood by the medical profession and for some women it can lead to leaving the workforce early. EDICa is

currently conducting a literature review, which will shape the next step of the research. We are planning to circulate surveys and hold focus groups later in the year to better understand the lived experiences of those managing menstruation, menstrual disorders and (peri)menopause in the workplace. Alongside this, EDICa is leading menstrual health training at research partner sites.

EDICa's PI, Professor Kate Sang, has already been researching this topic and conducts training in this area. It is evident that those who experience problematic menstruation and (peri)menopause face a number of issues in the workplace, but it is not yet clear what a menstrual health-friendly workplace should look like. EDICa's research aims to fill this gap while also taking into account marginalised and intersectional experiences, which have thus far been substantially silenced and overlooked.

You can read Professor Sang's publications on this topic below:

[Blood Work: Managing Menstruation, Menopause and Gynaecological Health Conditions in the Workplace](#)

[Working it out: Will the improved management of leaky bodies in the workplace create a dialogue between medical sociology and disability studies?](#)

The Research Process

In this workstream we aim to determine how EDI can be embedded in the research process and increase the diversity literacy of those working in the research and innovation ecosystem.

The University of Louisville (USA) explains that *"Individuals who are diversity literate value difference, recognize the effects of difference on individuals' lives, and understand how to intervene to reduce the impact of structural barriers that stand in the way of inclusion and social equity."*

EDICa is conducting a literature review of material on the peer review process for publications and funding applications. We are also looking at what guidance is given to reviewers in terms of that diversity literacy. We will be publishing our findings later this year, and sharing any good practices we uncover.

The Organisation of Work

In this workstream we aim to identify how work can be organised in a variety of research workplaces to create enabling workspaces.

An early priority of the Funders was looking at the impact of Covid-19 on the research and innovation system.

In April we hosted four focus groups to get an understanding of the types of challenges experienced by researchers across the various disciplines and career stages. This has informed our survey which will be shared in early July. We greatly hope a wide range of participants will engage with this survey – including those working in the innovation sector, the private sector, NGOs, government, as well as the typical PhD researchers and academics in higher education.

The literature review looking at Covid-19's impact on R&I has been underway for several weeks. There was a peak of studies and papers during the pandemic, but the subject has since tapered off. We are therefore interested to study the medium- to long-term impacts of the pandemic on R&I careers.

Keep an eye out for the survey questionnaire which we'll share across all our platforms, and please share widely amongst your networks.

We'd love to hear from the field – what good practice have you seen relating to the three workstreams? Email us at EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk with examples.

Seminar Series

EDICa are launching a Seminar Series to keep key stakeholders, caucus network members and partners informed on the work we are doing and promote industry-wide knowledge. The series will showcase the work of the project team, specifically relating to the three workstreams. It will also focus on closely related topics that others are working on.

Join us for our first seminar series '*In conversation with the EDICa team*' at **13:00 UK time on 19 September, 2023**, and hear from our workstream leads, moderated by Professor Jason Arday. To learn about our speakers and register for the seminar please follow this link:

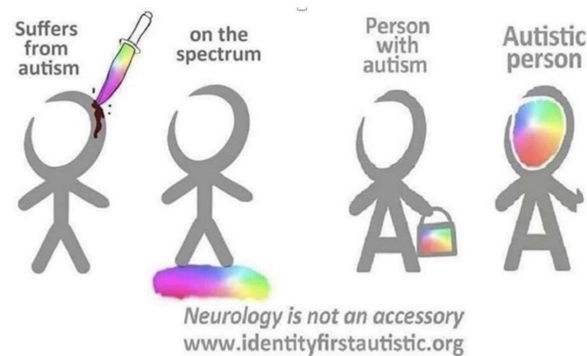
<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Seminars>

There is the opportunity in the registration process to let us know if you require any adjustments or accommodations in order to attend.

If have a topic you think we should discuss, or an existing event we can support and share via this platform, please reach out to us at EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk.

What we're into just now

Podcast "The Deco-Stop" did a deep-dive into neurodiversity in science in March this year. EDICa Postdoctoral Research Associate, Dr Cat Morgan, was interviewed on the podcast about a predecessor project – EnDISC: Enabling Neurodiverse Inclusive Science Careers. This hour and a half podcast is an entertaining way to learn your dyspraxia from your dyslexia, and to hear some great researchers talk about their lived experiences. Check out the podcast [here](#).



1 The image shows for stick figures. The first, titled *Suffers from autism*, shows the stick figure being stabbed with a rainbow-bladed dagger. The second, titled *“on the spectrum”*, shows the stick figure riding a rainbow board. The third, titled *“person with autism”*, shows the stick figure holding a rainbow bag. The fourth, titled *“Autistic person”*, shows the stick figure with the rainbow shading the head. The subtitle says *“Neurology is not an accessory. www.identityfirstautistic.org”*

This infographic is useful for showing why identity first language is becoming the default. It's the same for "disabled person" versus "person with disability". Disabled journalist Mik Scarlet explains more at length [here](#).

Spotlight on accessibility

EDICa has accessibility at the forefront of our communication methods and style. We have project members with lived experience of chronic conditions, neurodivergence, visual impairment, and working with the Deaf community.

For this newsletter, we've chosen a light grey background, sans serif font, and high-contrast section headings, all of which help dyslexic readers. For some people, the moving text blocks and style of scrolling of Microsoft Sway can be really distracting. For this reason we've provided a link to a static PDF version of the newsletter.

Alt Text

When creating a webpage to display photos of the EDICa team, the issue of Alt Text was especially important. We needed to show that our project team was not only diverse in lived experience (which is not visible) but also gender and race/ethnicity. Was it appropriate to describe in Alt Text the colour of their skin? Their hair colour? And for people from the Indian subcontinent or Middle East, how do we describe them without knowing their origins, which could be generations past?

We did some research and found deafblind activist and Harvard law graduate Haben Girma. She encourages descriptions that enable the blind reader to perceive what the sighted person sees – e.g. the colour of the skin. In this video she explains that it's important for a blind person to know she is a Black woman. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCcsp7BUscK>

Haben also says it's a choice to share the information. EDICa consulted the project team members about the Alt Text describing them before publishing the webpage. You can see or hear the end result here: <https://disc.hw.ac.uk/about-edica/>

We're always looking to improve. Send us constructive feedback at EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk .

Get Involved

Sign up to receive our newsletter and calls for participation and Flexible Fund:

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Subscription>

Follow us on Twitter [@EDI_Caucus](https://twitter.com/EDI_Caucus) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/edi-caucus/).

To unsubscribe from our newsletter, please email EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk

EDI Caucus

Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

The logo for EDICa, featuring the letters 'EDICa' in a sans-serif font. The 'E', 'D', and 'I' are black, while the 'C' and 'a' are blue. A horizontal line is positioned below the letters.

Funders of the EDI Caucus

