Athena Swan Action Plan 2025-2030

Notes:

Our action plan is divided into six themes, developed from our self-assessment activities. Within each themed element of the action plan we have highlighted the key activities covered by those themes.

1. Embedding EDI throughout the University
2. Building a work environment that supports the work-life balance of all colleagues
3. Changing the culture – Tackling unacceptable behaviours
4. Ensuring equality of opportunity for all colleagues through fair and transparent development and promotion opportunities
5. Increasing the representation of women in the talent pipeline (attraction, retention and progression)
6. Creating a vibrant and inclusive research culture to support and enable staff to deliver high-quality research

This is a live document. Progress towards some actions has already begun. Others will begin in future academic years. Some of our actions require the development of a new dataset, and regular monitoring of that data, before interventions or changes can be implemented. However, without this self-assessment activity, we would not be in a position to further develop these datasets.

Owing to the development of our datasets and enhanced understanding, we are now in a position to do more to consider our gender and race equality activities intersectionally, and as part of wider commitments to EDI.

This plan's actions have been developed by our Gender Equality Steering Group (GESG), chaired by our Senior Sponsor for Gender at Northumbria. The GESG members are diverse, including academic and professional support staff at different grades, the Women's Network Chairs, the Faculty Directors of EDI and student representatives.

Summary table of the Athena Swan Action Themes and Priority Objectives. The full action plan follows.

Embedding EDI throughout the University	Building a work environment that supports the work-life balance of all colleagues	Changing the culture – Tackling unacceptable behaviours	Ensuring equality of opportunity for all colleagues through fair and transparent development and promotion opportunities	Increasing the representation of women in the talent pipeline (attraction, retention and progression)	Creating a vibrant and inclusive research culture to support and enable staff to deliver high-quality research
Support the University, academic departments and faculties to advance their efforts in achieving gender equality.	Increase in support given to colleagues in relation to family commitments.	Increase awareness and confidence in using the Unacceptable Behaviours Reporting Tool.	Ensure participation in leadership programmes has an impact on promotion and progression.	Strengthen our recruitment processes to address gender imbalances.	Demonstrate equality and fairness in our approach to developing a REF2029 Code of Practice.
Staff are represented within the University decision-making structures.	Ensure colleagues and line managers feel supported in navigating flexible working requests and facilitating part-time working.	Visible commitment to tackling unacceptable behaviours.	Women who participate in leadership development activities have an opportunity to apply their learning and are supported to do so.	Strengthen our Academic Development Review (ADR) process.	Support a distributed and empowered network of leaders for research.
Promote inclusive and equitable decision-making.	Improve the transparency and fairness of the application of the Academic Workload Model.	Tackle misogyny and sexual harassment.	Leadership development is available for all colleagues who lead and manage others and aspiring leaders and managers.	Improve HR processes to support colleagues in achieving goals.	Develop our understanding of funding application and success rates, and acting on what we find.
Increase EDI awareness.	Strengthen and increase awareness of existing University processes/guidance supporting work-life balance.	Raise awareness and establish a supportive environment for individuals experiencing domestic abuse.	Improve support for ECRs/ECAs and PGR students.	Address the Gender Pay Gap.	We challenge inequalities in the research ecosystem, and grow a more vibrant, fair and inclusive research culture.

Ref No	Rationale	Planned actions and outputs		Start Date	End Date	Responsibility	Success Measure
Priority 1: Embedding EDI throughout the University							
1	**Success measures, outcomes and impact** **1A:** Increase in actions that are RAG rated as Green across all 4 EDI focus areas of Gender, Race, Disability, and LGBTQ+. **1B:** At least 50% of academic Departments/Faculties will have achieved an Athena Swan Silver award by 2029. **1C:** Target of 75% of respondents to the Staff Survey confirm that they are 'clear about the University's ambitions for gender equality'. **1D:** D-SAT/F-SAT chairs confirm that colleagues feel supported in carrying out gender equality work. **1E:** The representation of female staff on key decision-making committees should be between 40% and 60%. **1F:** Target of 80% of respondents to the Staff Survey confirming that 'The University is committed to achieving gender equality'. **1G:** Target of 80% of respondents in the Staff Survey confirming that 'My line manager promotes gender equality'. **1H:** Increase participants in Shadow Chair initiative from 4 (in 2024) to 30 (by 2028). **1I:** Increase the number of mentors and mentees involved in the Reverse Mentoring scheme – a target of year-on-year increase. **1J:** Target of 50% of respondents to Staff Survey confirming 'The University manages change effectively' and 'Changes are explained to staff'. **1K:** Interactional dataset available annually (without the need for submission of a request). **1L:** The number of unique participants to EDI awareness sessions increases year-on-year.						
1.1	**Support the University, academic departments, and faculties to advance their efforts to achieve gender equality** • Departments/Faculties are encouraged to be ambitious in their plans to address gender inequality and strive to achieve Silver Athena Swan awards. • 100% of academic departments hold Bronze awards and actively work on their action plans. • We have observed a high staff turnover on D-SATs, and we must ensure staff feel equipped to advance this work. • Anecdotal feedback from D-SAT Chairs suggests that the allocated workload is insufficient, especially in the year leading up to submission.	1.1.1	Progress the work to capture, align, and track EDI actions. Include actions from LGBTQ+ and Disability Action Plans. Propose aligned wording, where possible, to allow easier reporting and monitoring.	Jan 2026	Dec 2027	Director of EDI	Success Measure 1A
		1.1.2	Develop an Athena Swan toolkit tile on our intranet, which collates all useful information for D-SATs (including links to webinars, guidance on conducting Listening Groups, obtaining University data and progress updates on University actions).	Jan 2025	Dec 2026	EDI Manager	Success Measure 1B
		1.1.3	Formalise the D-SAT catch-up meetings with chairs so that they officially feed into the GESG.	Sept 2027	Ongoing	Chair of GESG	Success Measure 1B
		1.1.4	Create Working Groups to share best practices, inter-departmental collaboration and beacon activities related to gender equality work being undertaken across the University. Embed EDI into departmental away days by including it as a standing agenda item.	Sept 2026	Sept 2027	EDI Manager and D-SAT Chairs	Success Measures 1B and 1C
		1.1.5	Hold regular themed Athena Swan workshops for Faculty and Department SAT teams to share good practices throughout the University and discuss	Sept 2025	Ongoing	FDoEDI and EDI Manager	Success Measure 1C

					Start	End	Responsible	Success Measure

			methods for increasing awareness of the ongoing work being undertaken.				
	• Different structures are in place for D-SATs within departments. In some, the DHoEDI (with a workload of 30% for the EDI role) serves as the Chair of the D-SAT, while in others, a separate D-SAT Chair has been appointed. • 65% of respondents indicated they were clear about the University's ambitions for Gender Equality. Men (70%) were more positive than women (67%) and nonbinary (50%) staff.	1.1.6	Explore ways to accelerate gender equality work by creating a proposal for the EDI Committee that outlines moving to Faculty submissions. This is to include: - Advantages and disadvantages - Standardised structures - Guidance on the appointment of Chairs - Proposed workload hours (detailing workload expectations for the transition period, the year before submission and subsequent years, while implementing action plans).	Sept 2024	Sept 2025	EDI Manager and D-SAT chairs	Success Measure 1D
1.2	**Staff are represented within the University decision-making structures** Our senior decision makers are not very diverse (UE 0% BAME and 42% Female) PSS are not currently formally and consistently represented on EDI committees and EDI subgroups. There was low agreement in the Staff Survey that the Exec is sufficiently visible (53%).	1.2.1	Review and embed consideration of representation into the Key Decision-Making Committee's Terms of Reference. Where committee memberships are tied to a specific role, and lack of representation exists, committees are required to report back on how they involved staff when developing key or significant projects (i.e. creation of workstream groups). **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2027	Dec 2027	Relevant Committee Chairs	Success Measure 1E
		1.2.2	Conduct an annual review of EDI Committee Membership and all EDI subgroups (including the GESG) to ensure they remain representative. Call out for new members of subgroups to be done via the staff intranet to ensure transparency. Clearly reference time expectations and the associated workload connected to roles.	Sept 2026	Ongoing	Senior EDI Sponsors	Success Measures 1E and 1C
		1.2.3	Develop a process to ensure professional support representation on EDI committees and sub-groups, including how information or decisions will be disseminated effectively to professional support staff.	Sept 2027	Dec 2027	Director of EDI	Success Measure 1F
		1.2.4	Develop guidance on inclusive chairing of meetings, considering diverse voices, and promoting inclusive decision-making. Trial observers being invited to FEGs – HLS Faculty to pilot.	Jan 2028	Dec 2028	EDI Team and FPVC	Success Measures 1F, 1G and 1H

				Start	End	Owner	Measure
		1.2.5	Following the 2024 review of the Shadow Chair initiative, extend the scheme from 2024-25 to involve a broader range of committees and encourage a greater number of colleagues to express a desire to develop their leadership capacity. Members of UE will be included in the group shadowed. **(This is also a REC Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2024	Aug 2028	Director of EDI	Success Measure 1H
		1.2.6	Following the 2024 review of the Reverse Mentoring initiative, develop the scheme and look to extend it to cover a range of protected characteristics, including sex and gender. Mentors will be selected to align with our current colleague equality networks. Scheme impact to be reviewed at the end of 2025-26. **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2024	Aug 2028	Director of EDI	Success Measure 1I
		1.2.7	Further embed EDI considerations into selection processes for board positions, committees, staff governors' roles, etc. (including positive action and inclusive selection guidance).	Jan 2028	Dec 2028	Secretary to the Board and Director of Governance	Success Measure 1E
1.3	**Promote inclusive and equitable decision-making** • While EDI considerations are required to be highlighted in papers to UE, this practice is not extended to other important decision-making committees. • Whilst staff can request intersectional analysis, there is a need for a more holistic approach to dataset development (similar to gender dashboards). • There is low agreement among all genders in the Staff Survey that the University manages change effectively (38%), that changes are usually for the better (35%), and that changes are explained to staff (46%).	1.3.1	Review paperwork (coversheet and template documents) for the key decision-making committees to ensure they include a section highlighting EDI considerations and reference the EIA Process.	Jan 2026	Dec 2026	Secretary to the Board and Director Governance, Director of EDI	Success Measure 1J
		1.3.2	Create a new EIA repository to aid transparency of decision making, consultation undertaken and data reviewed. **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2024	July 2025 – Ongoing	Director of EDI	Success Measures 1J and IK
		1.3.3	Provide targeted training sessions to further embed the newly simplified EIA Process. **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2024	Ongoing	EDI Managers	Success Measure 1J
		1.3.4	Develop People Metrics to show intersectional demographics (gender and ethnicity) to inform shared initiatives. **(This is also a REC Action)**	Sept 2024	July 2025 Ongoing	Chief People Officer	Success Measure 1K

		1.3.5	Develop approaches to consultation with staff networks on policies and procedures, and consider the communication of any EDI-related changes.	Sept 2025	Sept 2026 Ongoing	Chief People Officer	Success Measure 1J
1.4	**Increase EDI awareness** • Gender Equality progress updates are communicated by various sources. In the Staff Survey, 65% of staff confirmed they were clear about the University's ambition for Gender Equality. • Engagement with EDI events is increasing, but further opportunities to engage are required.	1.4.1	Promote an ongoing annual programme featuring diverse speakers covering EDI-related topics, publicised to staff via the intranet. In 2025, the priorities will be speakers in relation to 'trans and non-binary support' and 'Cultural Competency.' **(This is also a LGBTQ+ Advancement Action)**	Sept 2025	Ongoing	FDoEDI, Director of EDI and Senior Sponsors of EDI Steering Groups	Success Measure 1L
		1.4.2	In addition to the progress updates in the annual EDI report, provide a mid-year progress update report on gender equality work for colleagues and Governors. This will be shared via the intranet. **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	April 2027	Ongoing	EDI Manager	Success Measure 1C
		1.4.3	Introduce a seminar series, promoting internal colleagues' research and practices in EDI-related areas.	Sept 2025	Ongoing	EDI Coordinator	Success Measures 1C and 1L
		1.4.4	Hold an EDI event (similar to EDI Conference) every two years to highlight the EDI work being undertaken across the University.	June 2026	Every two years	Director of EDI	Success Measures 1C and 1L

Priority 2: Building a Work Environment that Supports the Work-Life Balance of all Colleagues

2.	**Success measures, outcomes and impact** **2A:** An increase in the % of staff who respond positively to the Staff Survey question 'I am able to find the right balance between my work and home life' (A target of positive responses from 50% of academic women and 70% from staff with caring responsibilities). **2B:** Increase in the % of staff responding positively to the survey question 'I can meet the demands of the role without regularly working excessive hours'. (A target of positive responses from 40% of academic women and 55% from staff with caring responsibilities). **2C:** Listening Group feedback confirms positive experiences in relation to receiving information and support about family leave. **2D:** Increase in usage of Carers' Fund by 5% year on year. **2E:** Listening Group feedback confirms staff clarity around making flexible working requests, support around part-time working and line managers' understanding. **2F:** Post implementation, the 'Workload Listening Groups' confirm staff perceptions of fairness, increased transparency and consistency. **2G:** 40:40:20 workload split showing no gender difference. **2H:** Target of 85% of staff who respond positively to the Staff Survey question 'I am treated with fairness and respect'.

2.1	**Increase in support given to colleagues in relation to family commitments**	2.1.1	A commitment to enable those returning from maternity or adoption leave the option of returning to full time work for a defined period from their return-to-work date.	Sept 2028	Dec 2028	Chief Financial Officer and the Director of HR	Success Measure 2A

• In the Staff Survey: - 44% of female academics reported that they were able to find the right balance between work and home life. This figure is comparable to that of male academics, which stands at 43%, but is significantly lower than the percentage for PSS. Among female staff with caring responsibilities, only 61% responded positively, compared to 70% of those without such responsibilities. A similar trend was observed among male staff, with 54% of those with caregiving duties responding positively, compared to 63% of their counterparts without those responsibilities. 30% of female academic staff indicated that they could meet the demands of their roles without working excessive hours. Notably, female staff with caring responsibilities responded more positively (51%) than males with caring responsibilities, who responded at 45%. • In the Listening Groups on family-related support, there were 31 mentions where HR had not provided the support or service expected. • HR tickets were raised in the Listening Groups as impersonal when colleagues needed advice on life-changing events. There was strong feedback on the requirement for contacts in HR who were knowledgeable about family leave and could provide continuity of advice. • We wish to introduce sector-leading benefits and/or support.	2.1.2 Review the phased return period for those returning from adoption and maternity leave, with a suggested increase from two to four weeks.	Sept 2028	Dec 2028	Director of HR	Success Measures 2A and 2B
	2.1.3 Ensure HR Managers and Advisers are fully trained on all aspects of family leave, handling all HR tickets related to family leave and serving as designated contact points for individuals throughout their journey.	Sept 2026	Ongoing	Director of HR	Success Measure 2C
	2.1.4 Create an online toolkit or booklet that gathers essential information for colleagues. This toolkit/booklet will focus on two main groups: - Carers - Parents Promote the toolkit/booklet during induction sessions, on the intranet, and within resources for line managers. Additionally, explore how the toolkit/booklet can be automatically included in responses to any family-related inquiries.	Sept 2027	Sept 2028	Director of People Experience	Success Measure 2C
	2.1.5 Enhance staff awareness of family-friendly leave by organising regular information sessions and providing drop-in sessions, including targeted sessions for academic staff.	Sept 2027	Ongoing	HR Managers	Success Measures 2A and 2C
	2.1.6 Increase awareness and usage of the Carers' Fund. Promote the fund via departmental and university channels.	Sept 2026	Sept 2026	FDoEDI and EDI Manager	Success Measure 2D
	2.1.7 Consider the introduction of a Carer's Passport. Work with the Timetabling team to provide join-up with other processes.	Sept 2028	Aug 2029	Timetabling Systems Manager, Director of EDI	Success Measures 2A and 2B
	2.1.8 Review approach to carers' leave, including how it is accessed and whether it is paid.	Sept 2026	Aug 2028	Chief People Officer	Success Measure 2A
	2.1.9 Review Paternity Leave Policy – suggested increase from four weeks to six weeks at full pay, with no qualifying period.	Sept 2026	Aug 2028	Chief People Officer	Success Measure 2A
	2.1.10 Develop a proposal to become a member of Carers UK, which will give access to digital resources for staff.	Sept 2028	Aug 2029	EDI Manager	Success Measures 2A and 2B

2.2	**Ensure colleagues and line managers feel supported in navigating flexible working requests and facilitating part-time work** • In 2024, 21% of our staff work part-time, with women making up 76% of our part-time staff. • 11% of academics are in part-time contracts (slightly below the national average) and 29% of PSS colleagues. • In the Listening Groups: - Women emphasised the need for clear guidance on the flexible working process, greater transparency on what is possible, and the need for line manager training. - Women expressed hesitancy about applying for advancement due to concerns it might result in a loss of flexible working arrangements. Additionally, they were uncertain about the possibility of working a reduced FTE in senior grades. - Part-time workers felt impacted by standardisation of procedures on part-time working patterns - Most part-time workers felt positive about their decision to go part-time and valued the ability to do so.	2.2.1	Update the flexible working policy to explicitly state that the University will consider requests at all grades, with an action to monitor its uptake. **(This is also a Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2026	Dec 2027	Director of People Experience and Director of HR	Success Measure 2E
		2.2.2	Provide case studies demonstrating the implementation of flexible working policies. Examples to include: - different types of working arrangements - methods for adjusting workload - strategies for supporting staff who work part-time.	Sept 2027	Sept 2028	Director of People Experience	Success Measure 2E
		2.2.3	Ensure part-time workers have access and can contribute to wider development opportunities (e.g. recorded sessions, remote attendance options, rotating times/dates of regular meetings, away days etc.)	Sept 2027	Sept 2028	FPVCs and Director of OD	Success Measure 2E
		2.2.4	To increase colleagues' confidence and avoid feelings of disparity, ensure clarity for line managers and colleagues regarding approaches to part-time and flexible working. Guidance in relation to part-time and flexible working is provided in line managers' training and/or line managers' toolkit, and the 'People Update' to raise awareness.	Sept 2027	Sept 2028	HR Manager	Success Measure 2E
		2.2.5	Ensure that options to work flexibly are routinely explored and revisited during regular career and performance meetings with line managers. Review and update PDA Guidance accordingly.	Sept 2027	Sept 2028	Director of OD	Success Measure 2E
2.3	**Improve the transparency and fairness of the application of the Academic Workload Model** • The University held 19 Listening Groups on Academic Workloading to inform any proposed changes • There is inconsistency in how and what information is shared.	2.3.1	Agree and implement any actions following the Academic Workload Review process.	Sept 2024	Sept 2026	DVC, FPVC and HODs	Success Measure 2F
		2.3.2	Update the guidance re. Academic Workloads to include transparency of workload data and how to apply tariffs to part-time work (i.e. marking, assessment).	Sept 2024	Sept 2025	DVC and Chief People Officer	Success Measure 2F
		2.3.3	Arrange follow-up Listening Groups post-implementation to check for consistency, fairness and transparency.	Sept 2025	Sept 2026	DVC and Chief People Officer	Success Measure 2F

	• There remains a perception that workload allocation differs for women. However, the data analysis showed no overall gender difference, although slight variations occurred within some departments.	2.3.4	Continue to monitor data on the 40:40:20 workload split for any gendered differences at the university and departmental level and introduce actions to address them as appropriate.	Sept 2025	Ongoing	Gender Steering Group Chair and Deputy FPVCs for RKE/FD of EDI	Success Measure 2G
2.4	**Strengthen and increase awareness of existing University processes and guidance supporting work-life balance**	2.4.1	Review and recommend improvements to the existing guidance at the University (email etiquette, flexible working).	Sept 2026	Sept 2027	Gender Steering Group	Success Measures 2A, 2C and 2E
	• In the Listening Groups, it was apparent that informal practices that support staff can be implemented irregularly across the University. In some cases, actual guidance exists, but staff awareness is low. • Feedback has been received about the inconsistency of line managers in applying HR policies, where support is not explicitly outlined, resulting in varied experiences of assistance for colleagues struggling with fertility or baby loss.	2.4.2	Agree and introduce guidance on timing for key University meetings.	Sept 2028	Dec 2028	DVC and Director of People Experience	Success Measure 2F
		2.4.3	Update the Special Leave Policy to be explicit about sensitive/highly personal situations (i.e. infertility treatment, miscarriage, pregnancy loss, same sex relationships). **(This is also a LGBTQ+ Advancement Action)**	Sept 2026	Sept 2027	Director of People Experience	Success Measure 2H
		2.4.4	Monitor for consistency of the application of our flexible working policies and practices that promote work-life balance.	Sept 2027	Sept 2028	FPVCs and Director of EDI	Success Measures 2C and 2F

Priority 3: Changing the Culture – Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours

3 **Success measures, outcomes and impact**

    3A: Increase the awareness and usage of our reporting tool (acknowledging that this may increase the reported number of low-level instances of unacceptable behaviour) by students and staff. Target of 70% of respondents to Staff Survey confirming they know how to report.

    3B: Target of 80% of respondents to the Staff Survey confirming they feel confident in 'reporting bullying and/or discrimination.'

    3C: Target of 85% of respondents to the Staff Survey confirming that 'They are treated with fairness and respect' and the 'University respects individual differences'.

    3D: Target of 65% of respondents to the Staff Survey confirming 'That the University Executive are committed to and demonstrate the University Values and Behaviours.'

    3E: Reduction year-on-year in students indicating via the OfS Sexual misconduct prevalence survey in relation to students who have experienced unwanted behaviours 'of a sexual nature'.

    3F: Listening Group feedback confirms that staff and line managers know the resources available to support colleagues and line managers in dealing with domestic abuse situations.

3.1	**Increase awareness and confidence in using the Unacceptable Behaviours Reporting Tool** • Whilst the use of the Unacceptable Behaviours Reporting Tool has increased by 17% from 2021/22 (n 88) to 2023 (n 103), we wish to increase the use further. • Our Staff Survey shows that women are slightly less confident than men in raising concerns over bullying or discrimination. • Our Listening Groups indicated that staff were unclear about what happens after you report unacceptable behaviours.	3.1.1	Provide to EDI Committee members and People Committee (sub-committee of Board of Governors) bi-annual progress updates on actions and an overview of data on reported unacceptable behaviours and their outcomes. Data will be analysed by type of case/incident, trends and outcomes and will be split by professional support, academic and students. Further analysis will be undertaken to consider data by Gender, Race, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Transgender. **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Nov 2025	Nov of each year - Ongoing	Head of Employee Relations and Director of HR	Success Measure 3A
		3.1.2	Review the Unacceptable Behaviours Policy (including definitions) annually and ensure regular awareness-raising communications and campaigns. This will include the intention of the Unacceptable Behaviours process, what steps happen after you report, highlighting routes to internal and external support and the range of information available via the portal. **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	Head of Employee Relations and Director of HR	Success Measures 3A and 3B
		3.1.3	Train staff involved in chairing disciplinary and grievance hearings on the complexity of harassment cases, including sexual violence, microaggressions and the impact of intersectionality.	Jan 2026	Ongoing	Head of Employee Relations and Director of HR	Success Measure 3C
		3.1.4	Training for both staff and students will be enhanced to include information on: - expected behaviours - what constitutes unacceptable behaviours - how to report incidents - potential consequences of unacceptable behaviours - bystander intervention/consent - FAQ/Myth-busting **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2025	Ongoing	Director of Student, Library and Academic Services, Head of Employee Relations and and Director of OD	Success Measures 3B and 3C
3.2	**Visible commitment to tackling unacceptable behaviours**	3.2.1	Senior Sponsors will be visible and vocal regarding this agenda. Annual communications will reinforce this tone,	Sept 2025	Annual	UE and senior sponsors	Success Measure

							3D

					Start	End	Owner	Success

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">• There was strong awareness (91%) of the Values and Behaviours at Northumbria. 79% of staff confirmed that their line manager was committed to these behaviours, but only 57% of staff believed the University Executive demonstrated them.</td><td>3.2.2</td><td>Training and speakers for leadership groups will be arranged to ensure they are familiar with current developments in the EDI space. Specifically, it will include topics such as:
- Gender-based violence
- Sexism
- Racism (all forms, including antisemitism and islamophobia)
- LGBTQ+ (Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia)
- Ableism
(This is also a LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)</td><td>Oct 2025</td><td>Oct 2029</td><td>Vice-Chancellor's Chief of Staff and Director of EDI</td><td>Success Measures 3C and 3D</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>3.2.3</td><td>Leadership development programmes will cover what it means to lead inclusively.
Concepts of inclusive leadership and psychological safety will be included to increase awareness of the benefits of diverse teams and to further develop skills for supportive conversations.
(This is also a REC Action)</td><td>Sept 2026</td><td>Oct 2029</td><td>Director of OD</td><td>Success Measure 3D</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>3.2.4</td><td>Staff have access to a series of EDI training/Speakers. These will include sessions on Effective Bystander Interventions, Dealing with Sexual Disclosures, Understanding Race Bias, Inclusive Leadership, Tackling Gender Bias, Allyship, Microaggressions, Cultural Awareness/Competence, and Inclusive Language.
(This is also a REC Action)</td><td>Sept 2025</td><td>Ongoing</td><td>EDI Team</td><td>Success Measures 3A and 3B</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.3</td><td>Tackling misogyny and sexual harassment

• Whilst there is substantial agreement in the Staff Survey (79%) that staff feel they are treated with fairness and respect, we have evidence from the Listening Groups and Misogyny survey that unacceptable</td><td>3.3.1</td><td>Hold misogyny workshop to explore definitions and practical intervention in HE environments and beyond. Report on recommendations to be presented to the EDI Committee and UE.</td><td>Nov 2024</td><td>May 2028</td><td>Chair of GESG</td><td>Success Measure 3E</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>3.3.2</td><td>Develop myth busting communications to explain the nuances of sexual harassment.
- Does not happen to just one gender
- How power imbalances impact
- Banter</td><td>Jan 2025</td><td>Jan 2029</td><td>Head of Employee Relations</td><td>Success Measures 3B and 3E</td></tr>
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highlighting the importance and value the University places on behaviours.

				Start	End	Owner	Measure
	behaviours (sexism and misogyny) are still being experienced by staff and students. • Women are more than twice as likely to experience sexual harassment than men (24% compared to 12%).		- Effect more important than intention - Generational changes				
		3.3.3	Develop a central risk assessment approach that outlines possible mitigation for specific roles and scenarios, i.e. - Lone workers - Travelling - Evening/Social events - Business Development Managers - Non-core staff - 1:2:1 sessions with students - Cultural difference **(This is also a LGBTQ+ Advancement Action)**	Jan 2025	Sept 2025	Director of Health and Safety and Head of Employee Relations	Success Measure 3C
		3.3.4	A working group has been established to address the Office for Students (OfS) condition related to harassment and sexual misconduct. Proposed recommendations will be reported to UE and the EDI Committee. Additionally, an annual update report will be provided to the GESG regarding the progress of the recommended actions.	Oct 2024	Aug 2025	Director of Student, Library and Academic Services	Success Measure 3E
3.4	**Raise awareness and establish a supportive environment for individuals experiencing domestic abuse.** • One in four women and one in seven men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. • When someone is experiencing domestic abuse, work might be their only safe place. • Domestic abuse affects people in the workplace. It is linked to depression and can impact work performance and attendance	3.4.1	A review of the impact of the support introduced by the University on Domestic Abuse for staff and students. This will look at: - Awareness of guidance by colleagues - Awareness of guidance by line managers - Usage of guidance	Jan 2026	Dec 2026	EDI Manager	Success Measure 3F
		3.4.2	Consider positioning of commitment as guidance or policy alongside HARM policy guidance.	Jan 2026	Dec 2026	Chief People Officer and Director of EDI	Success Measure 3F
		3.4.3	To further enhance the work being undertaken by the IDRT team, and allow the research to be shared, consider a proposal to become an EIDA Strategic Partner.	July 2025	Dec 2025	Gender Violence and Abuse - IDRT Team	Success Measure 3F
		3.4.4	Hold awareness events to highlight the work of the Gender Violence and Abuse IDRT work in relation to domestic abuse.	Nov 2026	Ongoing	Gender Violence and Abuse - IDRT Team and EDI Manager	Success Measure 3F

		3.4.5	People Update article to signpost staff and students to available guidance and support. Linked to key dates in the calendar (16 days of Activism)	Nov 2026	Annual	EDI Manager	Success Measure 3F

Priority 4 – Ensuring Equality of Opportunity for All Colleagues Through Fair and Transparent Development and Promotion Opportunities						
4	**Success measures, outcomes and impact** **4A:** Target of 45 % of women who respond positively to the Staff Survey question 'I am optimistic about opportunities for progression.' **4B:** Target of 65% for all staff responding positively to the Staff Survey question 'I have opportunities for personal development and growth at the University.' **4C**: Target of 65% of all staff respond positively to the Staff Survey question 'I feel that my contributions to the University are valued'. **4D:** Increase in the % of women who respond positively to the Staff Survey question 'Good performance is appreciated and recognised at the University'. **4E:** Increase in the % of women who achieve promotion following participation in leadership development activity. **4F:** Equality of opportunity in relation to promotions for research academics and academics on practice contracts or career pathways, which are essential to the delivery of the Education Strategy and ambitions in the University Strategy. **4G:** No adverse impact on women following the introduction of practitioner academic contracts and an increased target of maintaining at least 50% female participants in the ADR Process, with an increase in the success rate of all participants by 5% year on year. **4H:** Greater take-up of leadership development activity because it is seen as important in promotion. **4I:** 100% of participants of leadership programmes confirm that they have an agreed personal development plan on how to apply their learning. **4J:** Joined up leadership development activity (RIS/OD/EDI) with better signposting and an increased awareness amongst line managers and staff of the leadership development available. **4K:** Future Staff Surveys measure how supportive line managers are when staff are completing development programmes and in helping them to apply learning, and there is an increase in positive responses in each survey. **4L:** The Ambition in Action Programme is fully embedded in all faculties to support academic colleagues applying for promotion. **4M:** Confidence that female PGR students are accessing training opportunities at rates comparable to male PGR students. **4N:** Confidence that female PGR students are getting a proportionally equitable experience from the PGR training offer that is comparable to males. **4O:** No sex difference in PGR withdrawal rates. **4P:** 100% compliance with probationary policy.						
4.1	**Ensure participation in leadership programmes has an impact on promotion and progression** • Participation in leadership development programmes is not recognised in progression. • Colleagues are often unwilling to engage in leadership development programmes, evidenced by low engagement/high no-shows, because they do not see it as a valuable investment of their time. • Listening group feedback highlighted that women participating in Aurora struggle to identify their mentor.	4.1.1	Via various channels explicitly encourage active, voluntary participation in leadership development activities.	Sept 2025	Annual review	DVC and Director of HR	Success Measures 4A, 4B, 4E and 4H
		4.1.2	Update the ADR process to recognise the introduction of a new practice-focussed career pathway.	Sept 2025	Ongoing	DVC and Director of HR	Success Measures 4F and 4G
		4.1.3	Ensure that colleagues' learning from leadership development programmes, and the subsequent impact on their performance, is actively considered when assessing applications for promotion to leadership and management positions.	Sept 2025	Sept 2029	Director of HR	Success Measures 4A,4B, 4E and 4H
		4.1.4	Review PDA documentation to prompt line managers to discuss leadership development opportunities (programmes and portfolios).	May 2025	Dec 2025	Director of OD	Success Measures

				Start	End	Responsible	Success Measures
	• Listening group data indicates that a substantial % of women with longer service from a practice background are still considered ECRs and are overlooked for progression. (Also see action 5.2.5). • 59% of female academics reported that they have the opportunity for personal growth. This figure is higher than that for male academics, which stands at 42%, but is significantly lower than the percentage for PSS. • Academic women responded less positively in relation to feeling their 'contribution are valued' in comparison to all other staff (55%)							4A,4B, 4G and 4K
		4.1.5	Roll out the 'Ambition in Action' Programme across all faculties, which supports academics in working towards promotion.	Sept 2025	Sept 2029	Director of OD	Success Measures 4A, 4B, 4D and 4L
		4.1.6	Ensure that women who participate in external women's leadership programmes are offered the opportunity to become mentors through the university's mentoring programme and are provided with development to become effective mentors.	Jan 2025	Jan 2029	Director of EDI and Director of OD	Success Measures 4E, 4I and 4K
		4.1.7	Ensure women participating in Aurora are supported to identify an appropriate mentor in another faculty/service.	Jan 2025	Ongoing	OD Manager and Director of EDI	Success Measure 4B
4.2	**Women who participate in leadership development activities have an opportunity to and are supported to apply their learning** • Whilst several leadership development opportunities are made available for women, there is no support to apply learning and are supported to do so. • Listening group feedback highlighted that the experience of manager support when completing development programmes is inconsistent. • Listening group feedback highlighted that participants of external women's development programmes don't feel supported through the programme or feel that they are a cohort who can support each other.	4.2.1	Ensure PDA documentation prompts line managers to discuss and agree on how learning can be applied following participation in leadership development programmes.	May 2025	Ongoing	Director of OD	Success Measures 4A, 4B, 4I and 4K
		4.2.2	Review managers' induction/managers' toolkit/Management Standards to ensure managers know their role in supporting colleagues to apply their learning following participation in leadership development programmes.	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	Director of OD	Success Measures 4B, 4I and 4K
		4.2.3	On completion of external leadership development programmes, encourage women to have an agreed personal development plan to identify how they will apply their learning. For some, this may include activity such as a place on a University or Faculty level committee or a strategic working group for a minimum of one year rotation, e.g. Ethics Committee, Education Committee, EDI Committee etc., leading steering groups, project groups etc. outside of their own area of work and aligned to the delivery of the University Strategy.	Jan 2025	Ongoing	Director of EDI and Director of OD	Success Measures 4B, 4I and 4K
		4.2.4	Enable women who complete external leadership programmes, e.g. Aurora, to be supported to join an NU cohort and have opportunities to come together before,	Jan 2026	Ongoing	Director of EDI	Success Measure 4B

				Start	End	Owner	Success Measures
			during, and after the programme to create a community of learning and support.				
4.3	**Leadership development is available for all colleagues who lead and manage others, and aspiring leaders and managers.** • Listening group feedback highlighted that staff are unaware of the development already available through RIS and OD, as evidenced by low take-up. • Listening group feedback highlighted that women gain more from participating in in-person leadership development programmes over online programmes. • Listening group feedback highlighted that women who participate in leadership development programmes want to do more to support others in their development. • Research leadership and culture to be a key focus in the next REF.	4.3.1	Ensure access to one place for all academic or PSS colleagues to access development support. The Hub will include all leadership development opportunities, information, and resources, including Management Principles aligned to Northumbria behaviours.	Sept 2025	Sept 2026	Director of OD	Success Measures 4B and 4J
		4.3.2	Deliver an in-person mixed cohort (academic and professional support) leadership development programme aligned to the University Strategy and Northumbria Values and Behaviours to colleagues outside the Extended Leadership Team.	Sept 2025	Aug 2030	Director of OD	Success Measures 4B, 4E and 4J
		4.3.3	Showcase women's leadership progression stories, including stories that highlight barriers, challenges, etc.	Jan 2026	Annual	Director of EDI	Success Measures 4A and 4H
		4.3.4	Promote opportunities for mentoring / one-off mentoring conversations to support and inspire women.	Jan 2026	Ongoing	Director of OD and Director of EDI	Success Measures 4A and 4H
		4.3.5	Raise the profile and celebrate the impact and success of female academics internally and externally.	Oct 2025	Sept 2026	Marketing Comms teams	Success Measures 4A and 4H
		4.3.6	Encourage previous participants of women's leadership programmes to share their experiences, promote the programme, and offer advice and support to current and future participants, e.g., through a 'find out more' showcase event, talking heads, one-off conversation, etc.	Jan 2026	Ongoing	Director of EDI	Success Measures 4C and 4G
4.4	**Improve support for ECRs/ECAs and PGR students** • We do not currently analyse uptake or evaluation of PGR students' training by sex. • Monitor PGR non-completion rates in relation to sex. Understanding drop-out rates (and related reasons) for students could help inform ongoing approaches to student support	4.4.1	Develop processes to enhance annual reporting on PGR students' uptake of training opportunities. Use of PRES to evaluate their experience with regard to PGR training and development. **(This is also a REC Action)**	Sept 2028	Ongoing	Dean of Graduate School	Success Measures 4M and 4N
		4.4.2	Develop enhanced data reporting to enable identification of PGR non-completion trends by sex and ethnicity. Data to be monitored by the Graduate School Committee, which reports annually. **(This is also a REC Action)**	Sept 2028	Ongoing	Dean of Graduate School	Success Measure 4O

	and diversifying the pipeline in some disciplines. We need to ensure that ECRs/ECAs are supported and that we do not lose women from this career path. Comments from the Staff Survey indicate that teaching hours for ECRs/ECAs are not being adjusted during the probation period.	4.4.3	Review of the ECR/ECA workload to confirm adherence to the probation policy, ensuring teaching hour reductions are implemented without any gender bias.	Sept 2029	Sept 2030	DVC	Success Measure 4P

Priority 5 – Increasing the Representation of Women in the Talent Pipeline (Attraction, Retention and Progression)

5	**Success measures, outcomes and impact**

5A: Progress on increasing representation in the seven academic departments identified with under-representation by sex.
5B: Positive qualitative feedback around confidence and trust in the recruitment process.
5C: Increase in senior women's representation – Target of increasing female representation in grade 8 and 9 by 5%.
5D: Target of 45% staff confirming in the staff survey that 'I am optimistic about opportunities for progression'.
5E: Target of maintaining at least 50% of all participants in the ADR Process being female.
5F: Target of an increase in success rate of all participants by 5% year on year.
5G: Target of 85% of staff confirming in Staff Survey that 'I am clear about what I am expected to achieve my role'. Data to be analysed by length of service.
5H: Target of 75% of staff in the Staff Surveys agreeing that they 'receive constructive feedback on their performance'.
5I: No gender disparity in reasons for leaving.
5J: Reduction in the gender pay gap by increasing female representation in the upper pay quartiles.
5K: Audit/review confirms consistent and fair application of pay policies.

5.1	**Strengthen our recruitment processes to address gender imbalances** • Whilst some improvements have been made in the representation of women across the University. Under-representation remains in senior academic roles and in specific departments. • We aim to continuously attract a diverse pool of candidates and ensure the best candidates are appointed. Where there is underrepresentation, we will consider using positive action before any recruitment takes place. Five academic departments have been identified as having female	5.1.1	Undertake annual review of university data and local demographic data, including checks by the legal team, to inform ongoing use of positive action statements in recruitment processes (where under-representation is indicated in relation to gender and ethnicity). **(This is also a REC Action, LGBTQ+ Advancement Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2025	Sept 2026 - Ongoing	General Counsel and Director of EDI	Success Measure 5A
		5.1.2	Evaluate the impact of using positive action statements through an annual review of recruitment data. **(This is also a REC Action and Disability Leader Action)**	Sept 2026	Sept 2027 - Ongoing	Head of Recruitment	Success Measure 5A
		5.1.3	Develop 'diversifying our workforce' guidance/toolkit, including approaches to positive action, diversifying reach, gender mix at shortlisting and advice for attracting a diverse, high-quality pool of applicants. Ensure ongoing engagement with the toolkit to ensure it is being used across all business areas. Key messaging	July 2025	July 2026 - Ongoing	Head of Recruitment	Success Measure 5A

underrepresentation, and two academic departments have been identified as having male underrepresentation, i.e., under 35%. • Qualitative data indicates colleagues share uncertainty about the recruitment process and, at times, lack trust in it. Work is needed to ensure processes are appropriate and colleagues are trained in them. • Research indicates women only apply for the role if they meet 80% of the criteria; men apply if they meet 60%.		from the toolkit used to inform further 'bitesize' recruitment training opportunities. **(This is also a REC Action)**				
	5.1.4	Develop our approach to recruitment training, including: - Monitoring of training completions. - Creating a Hiring Manager network so that recruitment training updates can be shared easily. - Requirement for chairs to check that at least 50% of the interview panel have had training within the last three years. - Requiring chairs to have refresher training every three years.	Sept 2025	Sept 2026 - Ongoing	Head of Recruitment	Success Measure 5B
	5.1.5	Update our recruitment information to clarify when to undertake internal or external recruitment, how roles are graded, when search firms are used and the role of chairs. Increase all colleagues' awareness of the recruitment policy through the Chief People Officer's 'People Updates' to support transparency and clarity. **(This is also a REC Action)**	Sept 2026	Sept 2027	Head of Recruitment and Heads of Departments/Schools	Success Measure 5B
	5.1.6	Annual audit of at least two senior appointments (at Grade 9/10) to check for any potential bias in recruitment material, longlisting and shortlisting decisions.	Sept 2028	Sept 2029	Head of Recruitment	Success Measure 5B
	5.1.7	Continue to work with executive search firms to require them to produce long lists that are gender-balanced and ethnically diverse. Consider a requirement that for all executive-level appointments where shortlists result in all male candidates, the executive search firm is required to go back out to market search to attempt to find a more diverse pool.	Sept 2025	Ongoing	Head of Recruitment and Heads of Departments/Schools	Success Measures 5A and 5C
	5.1.8	Trial an agreed statement on senior role adverts 'Talk to us about your working pattern'. Whilst it is not always possible to accommodate, we are open to discussing options around working part-time and/or flexible working, even where a position is advertised as full-time.	Sept 2025	Sept 2026	Head of Recruitment and Heads of Departments/School	Success Measures 5A and 5C
	5.1.9	Review of the use of essential criteria in recruitment. Complete a deep dive within the HLS Faculty with HR	Sept 2024	Sept 2026	Head of Recruitment	Success Measure

				Start	End	Lead	Success Measure
			providing data to support FDoEDI exploring (anonymised) EDI data for candidates who met or didn't meet essential criteria. A spot check of CVs for those who didn't meet essential criteria to provide confidence in decision-making. Learning to be used to develop a briefing to support diverse recruitment. **(This is also a REC Action)**				5B
		5.1.10	Develop 'Vacancy' webpages to make more explicit the diversity of our workforce at Northumbria and in the region, to include more diverse career journeys, and about the region as a good place to work and live. **(This is also a REC Action and LGBTQ+ advancement Action)**	Sept 2025	July 2026	Head of Recruitment	Success Measures 5A and 5B
5.2	**Strengthen our Academic Development Review (ADR) process** • Female staff account for 31% of all Professors' roles, 44% of all Associate Professors' roles and 48% of our Assistant Professor roles. • There is a perception that progression via the teaching route is more challenging to evidence than via the research route. Staff also perceive that female academic staff are burdened with more teaching than male colleagues. • Qualitative data from our Listening Groups indicates that colleagues would like more clarity on the ADR process and have greater confidence in the process.	5.2.1	More transparent sharing of high-level ADR outcomes with colleagues to demonstrate the success of under-represented staff groups. This will be shared as part of portfolio updates with staff. **(This is also a REC Action)**	July 2025	July 2026 - Ongoing	Director of HR, OD Manager and DVC	Success Measures 5D, 5E and 5F
		5.2.2	Develop ADR guidance on - How panels should consider individual circumstances / EDI Considerations (including flexible/part-time working) - How to submit a confidential individual circumstance document for consideration - The various routes to progression - Benefits of engaging in the process early - Maintain transparency by publishing results of promotions by protected characteristics while maintaining confidentiality as much as possible - Go further to explain the rationale for the criteria for each stage of our Academic Career Pathway	Jan 2026	Dec 2026	OD Manager	Success Measures 5D, 5E and 5F
		5.2.3	Increase the number of case studies of staff who have gained academic progression whilst working part-time and through the education progression route.	Jan 2026	Dec 2026	OD Manager and HoDs	Success Measures 5D, 5E and 5F
		5.2.4	Continue to hold annual workshops that set up the ADR process and cover progressing your academic career, different routes to progression, structuring your	Sept 2025	Ongoing	UE and OD Manager	Success Measures 5D, 5E and 5F

			submission (used within the ADR Process), and how decisions are made.				
		5.2.5	Improve feedback to colleagues as part of the Academic Review Process using a standardised template and exemplars of good feedback.	Sept 2026	Ongoing	HoDs and OD Manager	Success Measure 5D
		5.2.6	Evaluate the impact of the ADR process in relation to practice-based roles (**see Action 4.1.2**). Review of key EDI data.	Jan 2026	Dec 2026	Director of HR and OD Manager	Success Measures 5D, 5E and 5F
5.3	**Improve HR processes to support colleagues in achieving goals.** • Staff Survey comments indicated that not all our colleagues received effective career conversations. We wish to create an environment where line managers feel equipped to hold effective conversations and colleagues value these. • Only 63% of respondents in the Staff Survey confirm that they receive constructive feedback. Academic men (52%) and women (53%) were the least positive. • We wish to ensure that all colleagues are supported during their probation period, and that we are not losing talent in our pipeline at this early stage.	5.3.1	Develop resources to support development conversations, including examples of development goals that colleagues have agreed and made progress against (especially where these have supported career progression) and improve signposting in line manager's induction and line-manager's toolkit. **(This is also a REC Action)**	July 2025	Ongoing	Director of OD	Success Measures 5G and 5H
		5.3.2	Remind appraisers annually of the training available and highlight key elements of good practice, including PDAs being: - evidence based. - focused on the quality of conversation. - about development as well as performance, including signposting to the range of development opportunities. - supported by regular check-ins - an opportunity to discuss support for individuals based on their circumstances (i.e. carer, parent, part-time worker). **(This is also a REC Action)**	Sept 2026	Sept 2028 ongoing	Director of OD	Success Measures 5G and 5H
		5.3.3	Publish 'People Update' article to remind colleagues of resources available to support effective probation conversations and probation goals. Signpost to the 'People Managers Toolkit' and the 'Induction Toolkit for New Starters'.	Jan 2026	Jan 2026	OD Manager	Success Measures 5G and 5H
		5.3.4	Roll out Academic Mentoring to align with the 'Professional Support Mentoring'. This will be offered as a priority to colleagues new to teaching as part of the PGCAP requirement.	Sept 2025	Ongoing	Director of OD	Success Measures 5G and 5H

		5.3.5	Analyse leavers' data to consider trends in the reasons why staff are leaving. Consider any gender-related issues (including part-time working). Establish working group if disparity is found.	Sept 2025	Ongoing	Head of People Experience	Success Measure 5I
		5.3.6	Undertake further work to support colleagues going through Menopause. To include: - Awareness session for line managers - Promotion of Employee Assistance Programme support - Signposting to internal support resources - Referencing resources on holding effective conversations - Consider whether to specifically reference menopause within the Attendance Policy.	Sept 2025	Ongoing	Director of EDI	Success Measure 5I
5.4	**Address the Gender Pay Gap** • Significantly reducing the gender pay gap has been recognised as a strategic priority at Northumbria. • Our pay gap data for 2023 indicates a slight increase in both the mean and median gender pay gap. • We recognise that various factors contribute to the gender pay gap, and we hope that many of the actions proposed in this application will help address it. However, we also want to ensure that our pay policies and their implementation do not inadvertently create further issues. • A working group has been established, and actions will be added once agreed.	5.4.1	Update guidance on starting salaries and formally communicate this to line managers.	Jan 2025	July 2025	Director of HR and Director EDI	Success Measures 5J and 5K
		5.4.2	Undertake audit of EDI impact of supplements, bonuses and starting salaries. An annual report to be produced for UE, alongside pay gap report, to outline any potential bias and recommendations.	Jan 2025	Ongoing	Director of HR and Director of EDI	Success Measures 5J and 5K
		5.4.3	Examine Gender, Ethnicity, Disability, and LGBTQ+ Pay Gaps and make recommendations for actions over the next 12 months and beyond. Actions relating to Gender will be included in this action plan to ensure proper monitoring.	Mar 2025	Ongoing	Director of HR and Director of EDI	Success Measures 5J and 5K

Priority 6 – Creating a Vibrant and Inclusive Research Culture to Support and Enable Staff to Deliver High-Quality Research

6	**Success measures, desired outcomes and impact:**
	6A: Our approach to REF2029 is underpinned by principles of EDI, transparency, accountability and consistency. **6B:** Establish a baseline for participation in research group leadership by protected characteristics and plan any necessary targeted interventions in 2025. **6C:** Establish baseline for participation in research leadership programme, and plan any necessary targeted interventions in 2026. **6D:** Improved process for regular reporting on protected characteristics in research applications and awards.

	6E: Establish baseline for external funding application and success rates and plan targeted interventions to tackle imbalances in 2026. **6F:** Application and success rates for female researchers in internal research funding schemes reflect % of women in disciplinary area. **6G:** Meaningful indicators are identified and used to measure the impact of our work to enhance our research culture, including its gendered impacts.						
6.1	**Demonstrate equality and fairness in our approach to developing a REF2029 Code of Practice** • Whilst we submitted more staff than ever in REF 2021, a lower proportion of females were submitted than would be expected when looking at the number of females in the overall eligible pool. Submission percentage for female staff was 7pp lower than the mean average. Submission percentage for male staff was 7pp higher than the mean average. • Major updates to policy for REF2029 will fundamentally change the notion of staff being submitted to REF. We will need to develop new approaches to ensuring our submission is underpinned by principles of EDI, transparency, accountability, and consistency.	6.1.1	Following publication of REF Policy Module 4, develop our Code of Practice in consultation with staff.	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	PVC RKE Operational Leads: Head of Research Delivery & Compliance, Director of EDI	Success Measure 6A
		6.1.2	Undertake EIA on Code of Practice, updating Code or putting in place mitigations to ensure no disadvantage to colleagues with protected characteristics.	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	PVC RKE Operational Leads: Head of Research Delivery & Compliance and Director of EDI	Success Measure 6A
		6.1.3	Ensure all staff with roles in REF governance undertake REF-specific Unconscious Bias training.	Jan 2025	Dec 2026	PVC RKE Operational Leads: Head of Research Delivery & Compliance and Director of HR	Success Measure 6A
		6.1.4	Following publication of REF Policy Module 4, and contributions to Knowledge and Understanding Policy & Guidance, develop meaningful measures to report on differentials in characteristics including Age, Gender, Ethnicity and part-time working. This may relate to staff included in the calculation of the volume measure (staff with SIGRES), and/or the contributions of staff included in the submission.	Jan 202	Oct 2028	PVC RKE Operational Leads: Head of Research Delivery & Compliance and Director of HR	Success Measure 6A
6.2	**Support a distributed and empowered network of leaders for research**	6.2.1	Establish mechanism for routine collection, storage and publication of names and contact details of research group leads and co-leads.	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	Dean of Research Culture Operational Leads:	Success Measure 6B

	• Our University Strategy makes clear that our ambitions for research are underpinned by a distributed and empowered network of research leaders. • In addition to formal departmental and faculty management roles, 'research leadership' also comprises leadership of IDRTs, and 'peaks of excellence'. Practice in recruitment to these roles varies, as does the availability of centrally held data about role holders.					Researcher Development & Skills Manager	
		6.2.2	Analyse data on staff holding research leadership roles (research group leads and co-leads, IDRT leads, peaks of excellence leads) and report on differentials in personal characteristics.	Jan 2025	Sept 26	Director of EDI	Success Measure 6B
		6.2.3	Introduce a new leadership development programme to develop the leadership skills of academic colleagues to enable effective leadership and a vibrant research culture. Data on applications, and participation, to be collected and analysed.	Jan 2026	Sept 2027	Director of OD	Success Measure 6C
6.3	**Develop our understanding of funding application and success rates, and acting on what we find** • UKRI reports a gendered imbalance in applications for research funding (68% of principal investigator applications were male, and 64% of co-investigators). • Our reporting on the role of protected characteristics in application and success rates to external funders is currently occasional and involves manual interventions from two service areas. • The University distributes internal seedcorn research funding, creating a pipeline to applications for external funding. In October 2024, 44% of awarded applications and 50% of awarded projects had female principal investigators.	6.3.1	Develop a process for regular reporting on external applications and success rates by gender and other protected characteristics.	Jan 2025	Dec 2025 - Ongoing	Executive Director of Research and Innovation Services. Operational Leads: Head of Research Development and Director of EDI	Success Measure 6D
		6.3.2	Use data produced under 6.3.1 and publish success rates by major funders core to Northumbria (e.g. UKRI) to identify disparities and potential opportunities or interventions.	Jan 2025	Dec 2025 – Ongoing -	Executive Director of Research and Innovation Services. Operational Leads: Research Development Managers	Success Measure 6E
		6.3.3	Monitor application and success rates to internal funding schemes to ensure people in PI and Co-I roles are representative of demographics in their department/faculty, making targeted interventions where relevant. **(This is also a REC action)**	Sept 2025	Sept 2028 – Ongoing	Deputy Faculty PVCs for R&KE Operational Lead: Head of Research Development	Success Measure 6F

		6.3.4	Embed and build capacity around peer review principles, taking into account inclusive research practice, and unconscious bias training for reviewers.	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	Executive Director of Research and Innovation Services Operational Leads: Research Development Managers	Success Measure 6E
6.4	**We challenge inequalities in the research ecosystem, and grow a more vibrant, fair and inclusive research culture** • The launch of our Research Culture Action Plan will set out our plans to enhance our research culture for the benefits of all participants in the research process, irrespective of gender. • We must identify indicators that will enable us to measure the impact of our activity. • External drivers (Research Excellence Framework, inclusion of research culture in funding applications) require us to report on our research culture in ways that are meaningful to external audiences.	6.4.1	Undertake an EIA on the research culture action plan (including plans for its promotion and monitoring) and make adaptations or plan mitigations prior to publication.	Jan 2025	Apr 2025	Dean of Research Culture Operational Lead: Research Culture and Quality Manager	Success Measure 6G
		6.4.2	Ensure Research Culture Committee, responsible for monitoring the delivery of the action plan, maintains its current 'EDI voice' in its membership, ensuring engagement from underrepresented and minoritised groups.	Jan 2025	Ongoing	Dean of Research Culture Operational Lead: Head of Research Culture and Integrity	Success Measure 6G
		6.4.3	Embed EDI in the identification of research culture indicators, to ensure we gain insight into a) how staff and postgraduate research students experience our research culture (including analysis by sex), and b) the impact of our work, related to protected characteristics.	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	Dean of Research Culture Operational Lead: Research Culture and Quality Manager	Success Measure 6G