

# THE MIDLANDS HEALTH AND CARE INEQUALITIES POLICY COMMISSION

Led by Lord Victor Adebawale (Chair), Professor Kamlesh Khunti (Scientific Lead) and a team of expert Commissioners, with support from Midlands Innovation Health, the Policy Commission conducted an extensive programme of work to identify actions to address health and social care inequalities in the Midlands.

The Commission found that people in the Midlands face extensive inequalities and poor health outcomes, which include the region having the highest infant mortality rate in the UK and one in twelve adults diagnosed with diabetes.

Through a three-phase process (existing recommendations review, discussion with community members and leaders, and stakeholder engagement), the Commission identified the following critical barriers and associated challenge areas:

**Access:** appointments, language, physical accessibility, and gatekeeping

**Trust:** racism and discrimination, cultural awareness, and empathy and understanding

**Representation:** health and care workforce, NHS culture, intersectionality, and clinical trials

**Digital:** digital literacy, systems and data sharing, and data collection and accuracy

**Knowledge:** health literacy and mental health

Practical actions that can be delivered by all Midlands organisations to help to overcome these barriers and to provide the environment and opportunities needed for a fair and equitable health and care service can be summarised by the following high-level themes:

- › **Inclusion and representation within the workforce, leadership, policies, and practices**
- › **Involvement, co-development, and awareness**
- › **Education, skills, research and life-long training**
- › **Accountability, oversight, and process**

The Commission highlights examples of successful methods deployed locally, identified areas where further work and research are needed, and provided actionable recommendations for where regional partners and the government should focus effort to uplift our health and social care system to become preventative, inclusive, and accessible for all.

Regional leaders should use this report as a reference to inspire and guide their efforts towards tackling inequalities.

It is the view of the Policy Commission that significant improvements can be made in the Midlands, both in the short and long term, through the development of a clear regional strategy that addresses the following 10 priorities for change and includes delineation of the role and responsibilities of individual organisations:

1. Set tackling health inequalities as the priority.
2. Make people-powered health an essential.
3. Deliver whole system approaches.
4. Prioritise effective delivery and impact.
5. Develop and deliver a regional approach.
6. Capitalise on real community involvement.
7. Rebuild trust and respect.
8. Campaign for long-term investment.
9. Lead the way in data and digital done correctly.
10. Reflect local community need in policy and research.

By implementing the recommended priorities and using the report as a tool for review and monitoring, significant progress can be made in improving health outcomes for all in the Midlands.

The Commission will continue to progress forwards, looking to motivate further action and galvanise collaboration to overcome the barriers identified. For further information on any of the themes or priorities and to discuss collaborative opportunities, please contact: ([Alexandra.Archibald2@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Alexandra.Archibald2@nottingham.ac.uk)), Midlands Innovation Health.

