



Inclusive Research Leadership

Thrive: One Year On

Creating a more inclusive culture in research teams

This week is National Inclusion Week (23-29 September) and to mark the occasion we are celebrating the one-year anniversary of Thrive – a project seeking to create a more inclusive, positive and respectful research culture.

Launched in September 2023, the project's ambition is to develop a team-led approach that will provide an alternative to the traditional Principal Investigator (PI)-led model, increase the diversity of leadership voices and promote inclusion.

Funded through the Research England Development Fund, the two-year project is being led by the University of Liverpool in partnership with UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Advance HE.

During the past 12 months, the project team's core aim has been focused on identifying the steps that need to be taken to increase the diversity of voices in research, including technical and professional services colleagues, early and mid-career academics and under-represented groups.

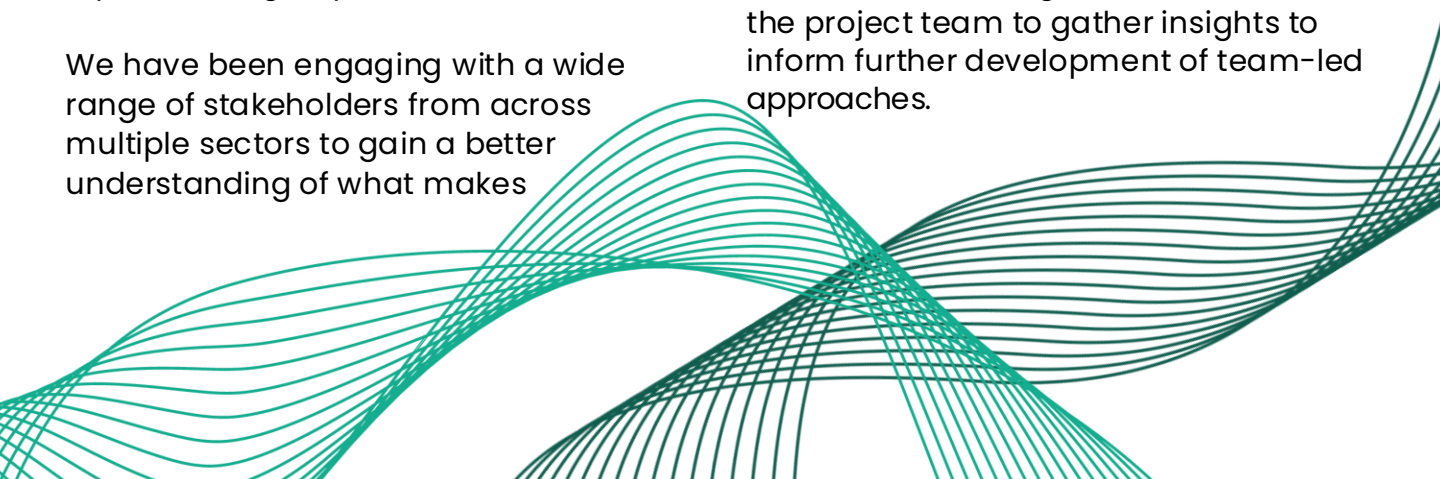
We have been engaging with a wide range of stakeholders from across multiple sectors to gain a better understanding of what makes



Stakeholders at workshop in February 2024

for effective team working and collaboration. We have also been able to explore what kind of changes may be needed to existing systems and processes to foster team working and have begun to consider how the combination of whole team expertise might lead to better research outcomes.

These findings have been used to help co-develop and shape a team-led approach to enable a more inclusive approach. This will be piloted through a AHRC's Responsive Mode Pilot: Mission Awards Outline Stage. This will enable the project team to gather insights to inform further development of team-led approaches.



Highlights from Year One

- **Collaborative working:** cross sector workshops were held to gather insights and feedback on the challenges and opportunities of team-led working.
- **Co-production:** stakeholder input helped to co-develop and refine the team-led approach and its underpinning **team convening principles**.
- **Building relationships:** worked closely with a range of stakeholders and partners to share experiences and learnings, and to discuss the Thrive principles.
- **Funding call:** worked with AHRC to help shape their Responsive Mode Pilot: Mission Awards Outline Stage, which was launched in May 2024, supported by two applicant webinars for interested applicants to gather more information.

One of the Thrive project co-leads, Professor Georgina Endfield, APVC for the Research Environment and Postgraduate Research at the University of Liverpool, said: "The first year of Thrive has been fast paced but exciting. It has been particularly rewarding to work with colleagues across and beyond our sector to help shape a set of team convening principles and to see engagement with these principles through AHRC's funding opportunity, 'Mission'.

"This project offers us the opportunity to consider how we can bring into relief different leadership voices and how this in turn might help to enhance team performance and develop a more positive, inclusive and rewarding research culture.

"As a team we are looking forward to seeing what the next 12 months will bring, and how this will help to reshape the research ecosystem."

Dr Jaideep Gupte, Director of Research, Strategy and Innovation, Arts and Humanities Research Council, added: "AHRC partnered with Thrive because we want to understand the challenges and opportunities of working with a team-convening approach through a tangible funding opportunity. Through this pilot, we hope we can set a course that not only shapes the future of arts and humanities research, but also the way research is done across the wider research and innovation sector."

