

# **INVITATION TO TENDER**

Creation of Maternity and Neonatal Photographic Image Library Resource

**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

## Contents

About the NHS Race and Health Observatory .....	2
Scope of the work .....	2
Tender submission .....	5
Selection criteria .....	6
Key Dates.....	6
Further information about this tender .....	8

## About the NHS Race and Health Observatory

The NHS Race and Health Observatory (RHO) is an independent organisation, supported by the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England, set up to explore ethnic inequalities in access to healthcare, experiences of healthcare, health outcomes, and inequalities experienced by Black and other ethnic minority members of the healthcare workforce. This includes assessing the aspirations to tackle ethnic health inequalities outlined in national healthcare policy. The RHO is a proactive investigator, providing strong recommendations that inform policymaking and facilitate change. The RHO is evidence-driven and solutions-focused.

The RHO is hosted by NHS Confederation. It's board and team are independent, we dictate our own direction and areas of focus. The RHO has three main functions:

- facilitating new, high-quality, and innovative research and evidence
- making strategic policy recommendations for change
- supporting the practical implementation of those recommendations.

## Scope of the work

### *Background*

Ethnic health inequalities are a long-standing challenge; Black women remain [three times](#) more likely to die during or soon after pregnancy compared to White women and the maternal death rate for women from Asian ethnic backgrounds remains two times higher than that of White women<sup>1</sup>. Babies from the Black ethnic group have the [highest rates](#) of stillbirths and infant deaths, with babies from the Asian ethnic group consistently the second highest.

In February 2022, the RHO published a rapid review (NHS RHO, 2022), which reported widespread ethnic inequalities in healthcare in the areas reviewed. Race and racism can have significant impacts on healthcare, influencing access to care, quality of care, health outcomes, and overall health disparities (Khan, 2021). In June 2023 the RHO published a review of neonatal assessment and practice in Black, Asian, and minority ethnic newborns.

The report highlighted that photos of neonates with different skin tones are not routinely included in medical textbooks or other learning resources. These images are also not commonly seen in public health campaigns or health information resources for members of the public. Current teaching and guidance are focussed on how to assess babies and mothers with White skin and therefore it has been deemed more difficult to spot changes in skin colour due to hypoxia, cyanosis, and jaundice in people with Black and Brown skin.

It is crucial that images and resources demonstrate how hypoxia, jaundice, and cyanosis present on a variety of skin tones. It is also imperative that other clinical signs are assessed for instances where visual confirmation of a condition could present differently on babies and mothers with Black and Brown skin. These measures will ensure healthcare staff have the competencies to deliver equitable healthcare. The report recommends a national open access image library to provide these valuable resources.

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<sup>1</sup> [Maternal mortality 2020-2022 | MBRRACE-UK | NPEU](#)

The RHO would like to commission the delivery of an open access, online photographic image library focussing on maternal and neonatal health. This resource could then be used widely by the NHS, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), third sector and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE), as well as members of the public. The image library would be a repository for organisations to have free access to images of mothers and babies with diverse skin tones with a variety of common medical conditions. These images could be used to create learning resources for health care professions or members of the public.

### *Project outline*

The project involves creating a coproduced, open-access photographic image library featuring medically verified images of neonates and pregnant women with a variety of skin tones to support assessment and diagnosis of conditions such as jaundice, hypoxia, cyanosis, mastitis and other common medical conditions that appear differently on different skin tones.

This work will be co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders, including those with lived experience, parents, carers, community organisations, NHSE, professional colleges, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), healthcare professionals, and educators and allies. The images will be ethically sourced ensuring appropriate remuneration is provided. Safeguarding, confidentiality, data storage and procedures will need to be ensured, as well as comprehensive parental and service user permissions to use the images in line with RHO General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies.

By working in partnership with individuals who have lived experience, the image library will serve as a valuable repository for parents, families, and the wider public. It is designed as a shared resource for NHS organisations, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), VCSEs, educators, and others to access and use images in the development of public-facing materials, such as information leaflets, public health campaigns, and educational resources.

This image library is not intended as a diagnostic tool, but rather as a visual aid to support training, education, and awareness-raising efforts. The overarching goal is to maximise impact by supporting earlier recognition and understanding of specific conditions affecting neonates and mothers.

The successful organisation is expected to work collaboratively with the NHS Race and Health Observatory's Health Action Resource Platform (HARP) to ensure we can produce a user-friendly interface with easy navigation and functionality with the images provided. They will work together to create digital infrastructure and implement digital safety measures, such as watermarks to prevent image adaptation and tracking usage online. Development of search categories and labelling of images will also be included.

We request, at a minimum, the following steps as part of your proposed methodology:

- Evidence of techniques and actions for community engagement and involvement using participatory methodology and co production
- Parents and families to be involved from the start of the project to ensure their needs for the images will be met

- Collaboration with medical professionals to create a list of maternal and neonatal images that will need to be collected in accordance with proper governance
- Collaboration with medical professions to verify images
- Clear governance and data protection protocols on permissions
- Inclusive representation for both neonates and pregnant women
- High resolution images that are suitable for downloading from a website
- Liaise with key named stakeholders selected by RHO who are already doing similar work.
- Need to demonstrate a track record in doing all the above

If your organisation believes it can fulfil some aspects of the proposed methodology but not all, we encourage you to consider a collaborative approach. The RHO recognises the power of collaboration and the potential for multiple organisations to pull their expertise and resources to achieve a greater impact. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the RHO directly.

### *Outputs*

At the end of the project, the successful organisation(s) should produce an open-source image library including medically verified, high resolution, primary sourced photographs of the following conditions on a range of different skin tone as a minimum:

- Jaundice
- Hypoxia
- Cyanosis
- Sepsis
- Common neonatal skin rashes
- Scarlett fever
- Impetigo
- Meningitis
- Pallor
- Rashes
- Measles
- Anaemia
- Mastitis
- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

The successful organisation will be expected to produce an interim library at the mid-way point of the project, and to present their findings to the RHO, our [Academic Reference Group](#) and [Maternal and Neonatal Health Working Group](#) at midway and at the end of project.

A project team will provide a written report outlining the methodology used, key insights, lessons learned and transferable recommendations for applying this approach to other clinical conditions or patient groups.

### *Detailed specifications*

- The contract will be for 12 months from the date of award, with a further 3-4 weeks for review and sign off. Longer periods may be considered if justification for the longer timescale can be provided.
- The project should include extensive and meaningful community engagement and involvement at all stages, including initial scoping and assurance of final product development. Demonstrate the use of meaningful coproduction and have a clear strategy for building relationships as well as empowering and supporting organisations and individuals once the project is complete.
- Quality assurance criteria should be developed based on user validation and stakeholder input and applied where appropriate.
- The final resource will be the open access image library on the RHO HARP, which will be primarily branded in the RHO's house style (with co-branding considered where appropriate). Additionally, we welcome innovative approaches for promoting the image library such as infographics, videos, animations, or other formats that enhance awareness of this product.
- We welcome bids of up to £100k. Higher value bids may be considered if adequate justification can be given for the additional amount.
- The image library will be for external publication.

## **Tender submission**

Your tender submission should be organised under the following headings:

### **'Project plan' to include:**

- An introduction illustrating your understanding of the brief, and of the role that race and racism play in determining differential experience and outcomes.
- A summary project plan including details of your proposed methodology and approach to community engagement and involvement including those with lived experience.
- A timeline including key dates to demonstrate how you would meet the proposed deadline.
- An indication of how much input and capacity would be required from the Observatory team.
- Details of key personnel who will be involved in the project including their expertise and skills.
- Key risks and mitigating actions for the project
- A commitment to recognising and recording unintended benefits and unintended consequences of this work. It could be in the form of a reflective log that is shared with the RHO for example.

### **'Fee proposal' to include:**

- Costings for the work including VAT.
- A detailed budget covering both personnel costs and any non-pay expenses.

- The costs of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.
- Outline of remuneration you will provide for make to people giving their time and expertise

**‘Company information’ to include:**

- A brief outline of your values, structure, size and capabilities in general.
- Detail of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.
- An explanation of the unique benefit you will bring to this work.
- Details of how you propose to ensure GDPR compliance, as appropriate.

**‘Supporting Evidence’ to include:**

- Examples of at least two similar tenders you have won and delivered and have resulted in significant impact/outcomes for ethnically diverse people and communities if available
- The details of two previous clients (preferably not-for-profit organisations) that we can contact for reference purposes (references will be taken up for shortlisted applicants).
- A completed equalities questionnaire (see schedule 1).

## Selection criteria

We will rank tenders based on:

1. Overall fit to requirements of the brief and proposed methods.
2. A demonstrated proven track record of delivering similar projects successfully, with impactful recommendations.
3. Relevant experience, skills and competencies of team, including a demonstration of cultural competence, understanding of maternity and neonatal health, and an ability to engage with issues around ethnic health use inequities and racism.
4. Value for money to the RHO.  
Your demonstrated approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and culture

## 5. Key Dates

ITT released	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Deadline for bids	19 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
Potential follow-up interviews	7/8 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
Contract awarded	October 2025
Interim images submitted to RHO	May 2026

Final images submitted to RHO HARP	August 2026
Launch of image library resource	October 2026



### Instructions for the return of the tenders

**Tenders should be submitted by email to [info@nhsrho.org](mailto:info@nhsrho.org)**

Tender ref: RHO\_TEN1042\_IMAGE\_LIBRARY

Tenders must be received by 5pm on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Tenders received after this date will not be considered.

It is incumbent on tenders to ensure they have all the information required for the preparation of their tenders.

Tenders will be evaluated by a panel of experts including those with lived experience.

**Further information about this tender can be obtained from: Arnie Puntis**

Name	<b>Arnie Puntis</b>
Title	Senior Research and Policy Manager
Email address	<a href="mailto:a.puntis@nhsrho.org">a.puntis@nhsrho.org</a>

## Schedule 1

### Equalities questionnaire

This questionnaire must be completed satisfactorily in order for any company to be considered to tender for this NHS Confederation contract. The equality legislation consists of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion/Belief) Regulations 2003, all amendments to these Acts and all relevant regulations made under them.

1. Is it your policy as an employer and as a service provider to comply with your statutory obligations under the equality legislation, which applies to Great Britain, or equivalent legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff?

Yes                      No

2. Accordingly, is it your practice not to discriminate directly or indirectly in breach of equality legislation which applies in Great Britain and legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff:

- In relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer and promote employees?

Yes                      No

- In relation to delivering services?

Yes                      No

3. Do you have a written equality policy?

Yes                      No

4. Does your equality policy cover:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal?

Yes                      No

- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment making it clear that these are disciplinary offences?

Yes                      No

- Identify the senior position for responsibility for the policy and its effective implementation?

Yes                      No

5. Is your policy on equality set out:

- In documents available and communicated to employees, managers, recognised trade unions or other representative groups?

Yes                      No

- In recruitment advertisements or other literature?

Yes                      No

- In materials promoting your services?

Yes                      No

Please evidence all questions.

If you answered NO to any part of questions 4 or 5 can you provide (and if so, please do) other evidence to show how you promote equalities in employment and service delivery.

6. In the last three years, have any findings of unlawful discrimination been made against your firm by the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal or any other court or in comparable proceedings in any other jurisdiction?

Yes                      No

7. In the last three years, has any contract with your organisation been terminated on grounds of your failure to comply with:

- Legislation prohibiting discrimination; or

Yes                      No

- Contract conditions relating to equality in the provision of services

Yes                      No

8. In the last three years, has your firm been the subject of formal investigations by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, The Equal Opportunities Commission or a comparable body, on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination?

Yes                      No

9. If the answer to question 6 and 7 is YES, or, in relation to question 8, a finding adverse to your organisation has been made, what steps have you taken as a result of that finding? Please summarise the details below and provide full details as an attachment.

10. If you are not currently subject to UK employment law, please supply details of your experience in complying with equivalent legislation that is designed to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. List any attached documents.

## **Guidance in answering the equality questionnaire**

When completing the questionnaire, all companies must answer each question fully and supply any documentary evidence requested. Failure to fully answer each question or failure to submit any documentary evidence required may lead the NHS Confederation to consider the answer unsatisfactory.

### **Question 1 and 2**

If your firm has implemented an effective equality policy, you will be able to answer yes to these questions. You will be able to confirm your answers by submitting your equality policy and supporting evidence as for as part of this section.

### **Question 3 and 4**

You will need to submit a copy of your firm's equality policy. You will need to ensure that your policy covers:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal
- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment
- Identifies the senior position responsibly for the policy

### **Question 5**

Documents available and method of communication to staff. You will be required to submit examples of any documents, which explain your firm's policies in respect of recruitment, selection, remuneration, training and promotion outside of the equality policy asked for in Question 3 and 4.

You will also need evidence of how your firm has communicated this document to staff i.e. notice boards or issue individual employees with a copy. There is no prescribed evidence here. You will need to submit whatever documents your firm uses for these purposes.

In recruitment advertisements or other literature, you will need to submit evidence that makes public your firm's commitment to equality in employment and service delivery.

Small firms may not have detailed procedures, but you must ensure that evidence is provided which demonstrates that personnel operate in accordance with a written equality policy that includes:

- Open recruitment practices such as using job centres and local newspapers to advertise vacancies
- Instructions about how the firm ensures that all job applicants are treated fairly.

In material promoting your services This relates to how your firm provides information in materials promoting your services e.g. in different languages, making information accessible to people with hearing and visual impairment and physical access for disabled users.

### **Question 6**

This question's concern is whether any court or industrial tribunal has found your firm guilty of unlawful discrimination in the last three years. It is important to be honest with your answers. The NHS Confederation may check your responses. If the answer is yes, you may wish to insert additional information which details the actions your firm has undertaken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

Answering yes will not automatically mean that you do not get the contract; you need to ensure that the NHS Confederation feels confident that you have sufficient measures put in place to prevent a re-occurrence.

**Question 7**

This question's concern is whether your firm has ever had a contract terminated for noncompliance with equality legislation or equality contract conditions. If the answer is yes, your firm may wish to submit additional information which details the actions they have taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

**Question 8**

This question asks whether your firm has had any investigation carried out, whatever the outcome. The NHS Confederation can check a contractor's answer from lists that the CRE and EOC produce, so please be honest. The NHS Confederation is aware that because a firm has been investigated does not mean that it is guilty of discrimination. The result of the investigation will be taken into account when assessing your firm's answers to the questionnaire.

**Question 9**

If your firm has been found guilty of unlawful discrimination, you will need to provide evidence that details the steps your firm has taken to correct the situation. The Court, Industrial Tribunal or CRE will have made recommendations about steps your firm should take to eliminate the discrimination. If no action or inadequate action has been taken in this respect, only then will your firm be considered refusal onto the tender list.

**Question 10**

If your firm is not subject to UK employment law you must ensure that you supply details of equivalent legislation that you adhere to.