

Southampton Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) programme

Background

Southampton City Council's Public Health team have commissioned Southampton Voluntary Services (SVS) and The Young Foundation to coordinate, oversee and support a programme of community participatory action research (CPAR).

CPAR is a research method whereby members of a community are trained as peer researchers to explore a particular topic within their community, and explore what action could be taken to address that issue. CPAR avoids some of the inevitable bias that can occur when 'expert' researchers engage with communities, and aims to support communities to solve issues for themselves.

In CPAR, all stakeholders are equal partners, working together to make positive change within communities. This type of research is sometimes known as peer research, or community action research. It is based on principles of equal partnership and collaboration. It is also participatory, engaging communities in the research process. The researchers themselves commonly come from the communities affected too, and will play a key role in developing the local research agenda, the research questions, and the tools to collect, analyse and disseminate their findings. The research should lead to action, resulting in change critical to that community.

This Southampton programme aims to explore issues around Covid-19, so collective action can be taken, based on the findings. For example, how to tackle vaccine hesitancy amongst younger people, or how to best get messages regarding Covid-19 to people whose first language isn't English.

The role of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations

To reach these communities, we are inviting expressions of interest from local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to recruit and support peer researchers. Funding will be available, including paying the peer researchers a living wage for their time. No research experience is needed by either organisations or peer researchers. Organisations may have thoughts about the issues that are important to explore, however this isn't essential as the workshops with The Young Foundation aim to co-design the research questions with the peer researchers.

Peer researchers will be expected to contribute approximately 150 to 200 hours of paid work, to be carried out within the duration of the project (until June 2022). Weekly time commitment is expected to be at least 16 hours (two days). The training will make up 16 to 20 hours of this total, and the peer researchers will need to commit to the scheduled training times. The actual research time can be worked flexibly to fit around other commitments.

How to get involved

Please complete the short [Expression of interest invite](#) and return to SVS by 5pm Wednesday 26 January.

Decisions on which proposals to take forward will be made the following day by a steering group made up of Public Health, NHS, SCC, The Young Foundation, SVS and community representatives. Successful applicants will be notified on Friday 28 January.

Whilst we are asking for potential ideas about the research topics, The Young Foundation will run co-design workshops with the peer researchers to further hone the research questions and ensure they are meaningful not only to the communities themselves, but also to the local health and care system.

What support will be offered?

SVS will co-ordinate this programme and administer payments to organisations. The Young Foundation is the expert research partner and will provide peer researcher training, facilitate the co-design and co-analysis workshops, and provide regular support and mentoring to the peer-researchers.

Once the steering group has decided on the proposals to take forward, representatives from the successful organisations will be invited to a briefing meeting to learn more about the programme and ask any questions.

Timeline

Applications are now open. Organisations are invited to complete the [Expression of interest](#) form.

We are currently working towards the following timeline for this work:

- **5pm, 26 January:** Expression of Interest deadline
- **28 January:** Successful applicants notified and peer researcher recruitment begins (recruitment materials will be provided)
- **14 February:** Recruitment deadline
- **w/c 21 February:** Peer researcher training commences
- **w/c 7 March:** Commence co-design phase, form research questions
- **w/c 21 March:** Commence research in communities
- **May:** Co-analysis of findings
- **May / June:** Reporting on findings
- **June:** Planning subsequent action

Further information

If you have any questions about the programme, please contact Alex Ivancevic at a.ivancevic@southamptonvs.org.uk or 07475 303073, or Rob Kurn at r.kurn@southamptonvs.org.uk or 07951 168794.