

Community Participatory Action Research Cohort 2: Training and Mentoring

A South East programme to develop community researchers

Cohort 2

Guide to Application
2023

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Introduction

Health Education England South East (HEE SE) Schools of Public Health in collaboration with the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities South East (OHID SE) will lead a programme of training and mentoring for up to 30 Community Researchers from voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations, the NHS and local authorities.

The programme will support organisations working with communities adversely affected by health inequalities to recruit, train and mentor their workforce in Community Participatory Action Researcher (**CPAR**). This means people from the communities we would like to focus on will have the skills to undertake research in **their own** communities. The findings of the research will be used to inform key decisions locally. It will also inform priorities and service development for marginalised communities in the South East.

The HEE SE CPAR Cohort 2 will explore the inequalities faced by marginalised communities as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

Programme background

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, inequalities in health became magnified amongst some Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. Public Health England's report (PHE), [COVID-19: understanding the impact on BAME communities](#), demonstrated the widening of existing health inequalities and made 8 recommendations.

In 2022 HEE SE, worked alongside OHID SE to implement a programme to support *Recommendation 2: Support community participatory research, in which researchers and community stakeholders engage as equal partners of the COVID-19*. [This programme](#) provided comprehensive training on CPAR to 35 individuals from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups.

The programme provided opportunities to develop community researchers, and to fill gaps and strengthen knowledge for certain previously excluded or not fully engaged communities. The programme recognised the importance of implementing the recommendations in the PHE report and alignment with the NHS People Plan and NHS Long Term Plan. It supported the Turning the Tide South East response to the inequitable impact of the pandemic on health inequalities, aiming to address to health and employment, racial and wider inequalities.

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*“I am now connected to new research jobs/roles, research bodies recognising the value of CPAR work to make a realistic community development planning.”
(Community researcher)*

The case for CPAR Cohort 2

The [Health Foundation reports](#) that ‘for the second time in 2 years, the UK is in the midst of an economic and health crisis. The rising cost of living risks many being unable to afford essentials to maintain their health and bringing increased stress and anxiety as families try to make ends meet. The Health Foundation identifies that lower income households are more at risk of poor health where nearly half of the poorest of households will have at least one person with poor health.

This programme will build on the CPAR pilot cohort taking on board the learning from delivering this innovative programme in enabling people and communities to have an equal voice in how health and care priorities and services are informed.

The focus of CPAR Cohort 2 will be the **Cost-of-Living Crisis** exploring the inequalities faced by marginalised communities as a result.

As the focus will be the cost-of-living crisis for marginalised communities, the programme will adopt the following policy levers: incorporating an [Equality delivery system](#) and [working in partnership with communities](#).

The programme will support and work with organisations working with communities to recruit, train and mentor community researchers to undertake participatory action research in their communities. The findings of the research will be shared to support Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in shaping their priorities/services for marginalised communities in the South East.

HEE will be working with the **Scottish Community Development Centre** and the **University of Reading** to deliver the programme of training and mentoring. We will also work with the **Institute of Voluntary Action Research** to help share the results of the research with strategic stakeholders who can act on the findings.

HEE South East Programme

Proposal Outline

The aims of the CPAR 2023 programme are:

- To provide training and mentoring in community participatory action research approaches for up to 30 individuals working in Local Authorities, NHS organisations, or who contribute to a voluntary sector organisation as either paid employees or volunteers.
- To develop and support community researchers and their host organisations to engage and build relationships with key stakeholders / strategic partners.
- To link trained community researchers and their host organisations with strategic partners who can implement the actions / outcomes of the researchers' work and findings.
- To celebrate community researchers' work and their findings at a regional showcase event.

Programme summary timeline

Applications open	13 March 2023	
CPAR Webinar	20 March, 12:00 - 13:00	Join on Teams
CPAR Q&A drop-in sessions	28 March, 12:00 - 13:00	Join on Teams
	5 April, 12:00 - 13:00	Join on Teams
Applications close	13 April 2023 noon	
Panel approval & applicants informed of outcome	20 April 2023	
Training & Mentoring programme starting date (detailed training dates to be confirmed, see appendix 2)	Week commencing 22 May 2023	
Research projects completed	10 May 2024	
Showcase event	17 -19 June 2024	

See project timeline in [Appendix 1](#)

Funding offer

- HEE will fund up to 15 hours at £15 per hour a week** to reimburse each researchers' time (this amount is based on [Agenda for Change](#) mid-Band 5)
- This payment is for attending all the training and mentoring programme, learning events, showcase and to undertake research activity.

* Payment for researchers excludes those already employed by the NHS or Local Authority who plan to undertake the Researcher role on their NHS/Local Authority role.

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- The timing and method of payments will be agreed between HEE, the organisation which will administer the payments, the researcher's host organisation and the researcher. The options will be one of the below:
 - monthly payment invoiced by the host organisation or the researcher, or
 - 50% upfront payment in May 2023 and 50% in December 2023 to the host organisation. HEE will cover the admin costs for invoicing the two payments
- Host organisations and / or researchers will be responsible for their national insurance, taxes or other pension payments as necessary.
- There is a grant of up to £1,000 per research project to support costs, for example, translation, filming, film editing, etc. This can be applied for and will be awarded on a case-by-case basis
- While we will aim to minimise travel to learning events, travel expenses can be added to invoices raised by host organisations.

Programme of Learning

The programme of learning will include online sessions of training and mentoring. Mentoring will be held in small groups or with individuals. This will provide an opportunity for critical reflection and understanding of the principles and practices required in making decisions about why and how CPAR can be deployed effectively.

Training will include the use of toolkits that have been developed from years of experience of Scottish Community Development Centre and the University of Reading on participatory action methods. See [Appendix 2](#) for an outline of this learning programme.

Guiding principles

Insights from the evaluation of the pilot have informed this programme and they form the following key principles:

Valuing the researchers	Researchers are not just another volunteer workforce and will be paid between 10-15 hours per week for up to 12 months
Co-production from the start	Community researchers from the pilot cohort who worked with the University of Reading will be involved in the training workshops. The steering group includes membership from a CPAR researcher from Cohort 1
Collaboration	An oversight group and steering group will form a broad range of stakeholders to support the design of the researcher recruitment process
Community-led	Communities will set the research question and identify their health priorities
Inclusion	Recruitment of those genuinely connected to communities, with an inclusive panel, ensuring representation at all levels
Learning from communities	HEE and our partners acknowledge that this is a learning process, and will be flexible and accommodating to any necessary changes needed for the programme

Application process

What kind of organisation can apply?

Voluntary, community, faith-based and social enterprises, NHS organisations or local authorities can apply for this opportunity. Your organisation must be working with communities adversely affected by health inequalities. We accept applications from organisations that are grassroots and non-registered charities. We will accept applications from organisations who were part of the pilot cohort provided that there is a new cohort of researchers.

Who is a community researcher?

A community researcher will be an individual who is a part of the community where the research will take place. The community researcher will have local knowledge, be engaged with their community, and have some lived experience of the issues taking place. The community researcher is not required to have any experience in research.

Key points in completing the application

- Your application must address issues related to the Cost-of-Living Crisis exploring the inequalities faced by marginalised communities as a result.
- Your organisation will have at least 2 candidates who will train as community researchers, each working between 10-15 hours per week.
- Your researchers and your organisation will meet the criteria set [below](#)
- You will have an idea on how you would like to present your findings; this can be in the form of a report, presentation, short film, animation, drama, music, or any other form of expression.

Please find the application on the [HEE Thames Valley website](#) – please email your application to: Publichealthschools.se@hee.nhs.uk by **Thursday 13 April 2023, 12:00**.

Key stakeholders

Programme Delivery Partners

Training and mentoring

The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) and the University of Reading will deliver the programme of training and mentoring. This will include the University of Reading PAR toolkit and model. For more information on their work in this area, please see University of Reading [Participatory Action Research](#), and [SCDC](#).

Working with strategic partners

Institute of Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) will deliver workshops with community researchers and their host organisations to support them to identify where/how the research might be best placed to influence health and care policy and practice and who to involve.

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

Community Researcher

The community researcher will either work or volunteer with the organisation that will make the application.

The roles and responsibilities are:

- Attend CPAR training and mentoring sessions and other training determined by the host organisations, and any meetings with your research lead.
- Attend and engage in the researchers' network sessions facilitated by HEE
- Determine how you will collect information, and how you will share your findings
- Devote 10 -15 hours per week to the related learning, research, and action outcomes
- Inform your organisation on your progress and seek support when required
- Work with your communities by being transparent about the purpose of the research
- Continue to involve your communities when you have completed your research by sharing the outcomes and seeking their feedback to inform future actions

Host organisation

This can be an organisation from the voluntary, community, faith-based or social enterprise sector, an NHS organisation, or Local Authority.

The roles and responsibilities will be:

- Identify community researchers through local networks
- Provide local or additional training which is mandatory or specific to enable the scope of research (e.g., GDPR, safeguarding, IT skills, manual handling)
- Provide equipment as required
- Agree with researchers on payments and invoicing, be transparent with researchers about any payment impact on state benefits etc
- Clarify any administrative costs when payments are raised
- Engage with any relevant forums or networks to bring all host organisations together to share learning
- Identify a point of contact who will be supporting the community researchers.

Host Organisation Lead

The Host Organisation lead will have experience in community research or working closely with local communities.

The roles and responsibilities will be:

- Develop a project plan with a timeline and budget for the research
- Be available for regular meetings with researchers to support them in their projects
- Identify any logistical support researchers may require
- Support researchers to identify research issue, and any resources that will lead to action outcome
- Identify additional training needs outside the CPAR programme. This could reflect any specific learning needs of researchers or organisational requirements
- Attend the monthly HEE CPAR Leads' forum and the dedicated learning sessions delivered by IVAR
- Inform HEE of any issues related to the researchers' progress, payments, organisational changes
- Act as a link between strategic stakeholders and communities undergoing research

Host organisation leads' time is not funded by HEE as the HEE funding is focused on training and education.

Scottish Community Development Centre & University of Reading

The Scottish Community Development Centre in partnership with the University of Reading have been commissioned to provide the training and mentoring for CPAR 2023. This partnership of training providers will deliver the following work:

The roles and responsibilities will be:

- Deliver training and mentoring programme according to timescales in the programme.
- Implement a training needs assessment of the cohort of community researchers recruited and amend as appropriate.
- Ensure there are planned opportunities for community researchers to come together and share their work and experiences with other community researchers, enabling peer-to-peer learning and lines of co-inquiry.
- Provide a platform to share tools, templates, guidance, and examples in an accessible way.
- Mentor and support researchers to develop a timeline of milestones with mini goals and longer-term goals.
- Provide support to community researchers to prepare their work to present to stakeholders.

Public Bodies

These are institutions like Health Education England, NHS England, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), Integrated Care Boards (ICB) or Local

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Authorities (LA) who are named in law to undertake activities on behalf of the Government.

The roles and responsibilities will be:

HEE

- Work with partners to establish an oversight group and a steering group of experts and stakeholders to lead and shape the CPAR project
- Act as main contact for stakeholders including training provider, host organisations and researchers for any issues relating to the project to include setting up forums and networks for relevant stakeholders
- Sharing learning from project with regional and national stakeholders

OHID

- Act as expert advisors to the project
- Make use of existing networks, partners, and connections to promote the programme and share learning with key stakeholders regionally and nationally
- Champion the work at strategic meetings and board meetings

Integrated Care Board and/or Local Authority

- Link with researchers to understand the research and findings
- Share the findings at strategic meetings to inform improvements to health and care service
- Ensure the voice of researchers and their recommendations are included in workplans and actioned by the relevant boards / systems
- Continue to engage with researchers to develop strong partnerships with communities across the system and at place level.

CPAR team and Governance

HEE SE team (the SE Schools of Public Health) will lead and manage this project:

- Joanne McEwan: Project Lead; Public Health Development Manager
- Em Rahman: Head of Public Health Workforce Development
- Branwen Thomas: Public Health Workforce Lead

The three groups listed below will provide additional governance for CPAR, ensuring the voices of our communities are heard and advocated for. Membership will be a broad representation from strategic stakeholders, those with expertise in community research, training providers, and a community researcher from the pilot cohort.

- **Oversight Group** – to provide leadership, guidance, and expertise to implementing the CPAR research. Meeting quarterly
- **Steering Group** – to provide direction and facilitate engagement in the delivery of CPAR 2023. Meeting two monthly
- **Operational Group** – to lead on the delivery and implementation of the CPAR programme working with the researchers and commissioned providers. Meeting monthly

FAQs

1. What is community participatory action research?

Community participatory action research is an approach to research where all stakeholders are equal partners, working together to make positive change within communities. This type of research is sometimes known as participatory action research (PAR), peer research, or community action research. All are based on similar principles of equal partnership, collaboration and addressing an issue from within the community.

‘Community’ indicates that the research is based on the issues that affect community members. **‘Participatory’** means engaging communities in the research process. **‘Action’** indicates that the outcome of the research will lead to change for that community. Researchers commonly come from the communities affected 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 an action or actions.

See the [Research Summaries](#) from the 2021-22 cohort for examples of projects.

2. How does the research lead to action?

Community participatory action research is often thought of as being a ‘cycle’ of:

identifying issues - researching – planning – action – reflecting on the action.

See [Appendix 3](#) on research cycle

It can be started anywhere within the cycle. Importantly during this work, community researchers will complete one cycle and plan for future work. To deliver within the timeframe of this funding opportunity, it may be practical to start with a defined action.

The approach may be:

- Where there is an issue in a community and carrying out research would help to act and make a positive change. For example, to understand an issue in more depth before delivering an intervention.
- Where an action is planned or underway that would benefit from a research component to understand the extent of change.

3. Does this research work require ethical approval?

This work carried out by community researchers does not require formal ethical approval. However, the research should be carried out in accordance with a sound approach to research ethics and in line with the standards of accountability, ethics and reporting of participating organisations. An example of an appropriate ethical framework can be found [here](#)[†] and can be expanded in accordance with procedures

[†] Action Research by, in and of Communities. A Practical Guide to Community-led Action Research [p. 28](#)

and policies of the organisation (e.g. protection of children and vulnerable adults) as appropriate to the topic and community.

This research will implement actions at a community level, and we do not envisage that this will present a risk or harm to the public. Researchers will be trained on how to deal with issues that arise when working with the public. In addition, participating organisations should be able to draw on their own policies to support researchers and ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing during the project.

To comply with General Data Protection regulation (GDPR) the community researchers will learn and be expected to implement the principles of consent, confidentiality, and safe storage of information.

4. What is the rationale for the payments?

Community researchers will come from various employment backgrounds. Some may have voluntary roles in their communities, and some may be in receipt of benefits. We want to ensure that receiving payments for research activity does not infringe upon their economic circumstances and therefore this is capped to 15 hours per week.

The hourly payment is measured against a level 5 (degree level) learner. In consultation with our partners, this fits with the NHS Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scale. Please note that this payment amount is not an AfC contract and the AfC terms and conditions do not apply.

5. What if researchers spend more than 15 hours on the research work, can they claim more funding?

The amount of time a researcher devotes to the research is up to the individual. HEE has scoped out this work with our partners and have concluded that 15 hours a week for 1 year is sufficient. The researcher will be advised by the mentors on the size of their research work and manageability. There is no expectation to write a dissertation!

We recommend that host organisations work with their researchers to ensure that the input is balanced. HEE is unable to offer funding above the 15 hours, but host organisations are welcome to seek their own funding to supplement any extra time spent on this activity.

6. Can the Organisation Host Research Lead receive funding to do their role?

The research lead is more of a project management role. HEE is responsible for commissioning the training and development of the health workforce and cannot pay for this role.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Project Timeline

CPAR Project Timeline 2023-24																		
	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24
Commissioning & Contracting																		
Engage stakeholders																		
Oversight Group (quarterly)																		
Steering Group (4-6 weeks)																		
Operational Group (2-3 weeks)																		
Open for applications																		
Introduction to CPAR Webinar																		
Recruitment																		
Training & Mentoring (stages 1-8)																		
Workshops between strategic partners and host orgs																		
Host organisation and researcher network forums																		
Research projects completed																		
Independent evaluation of programme																		
Showcase																		
Network membership																		

Appendix 2

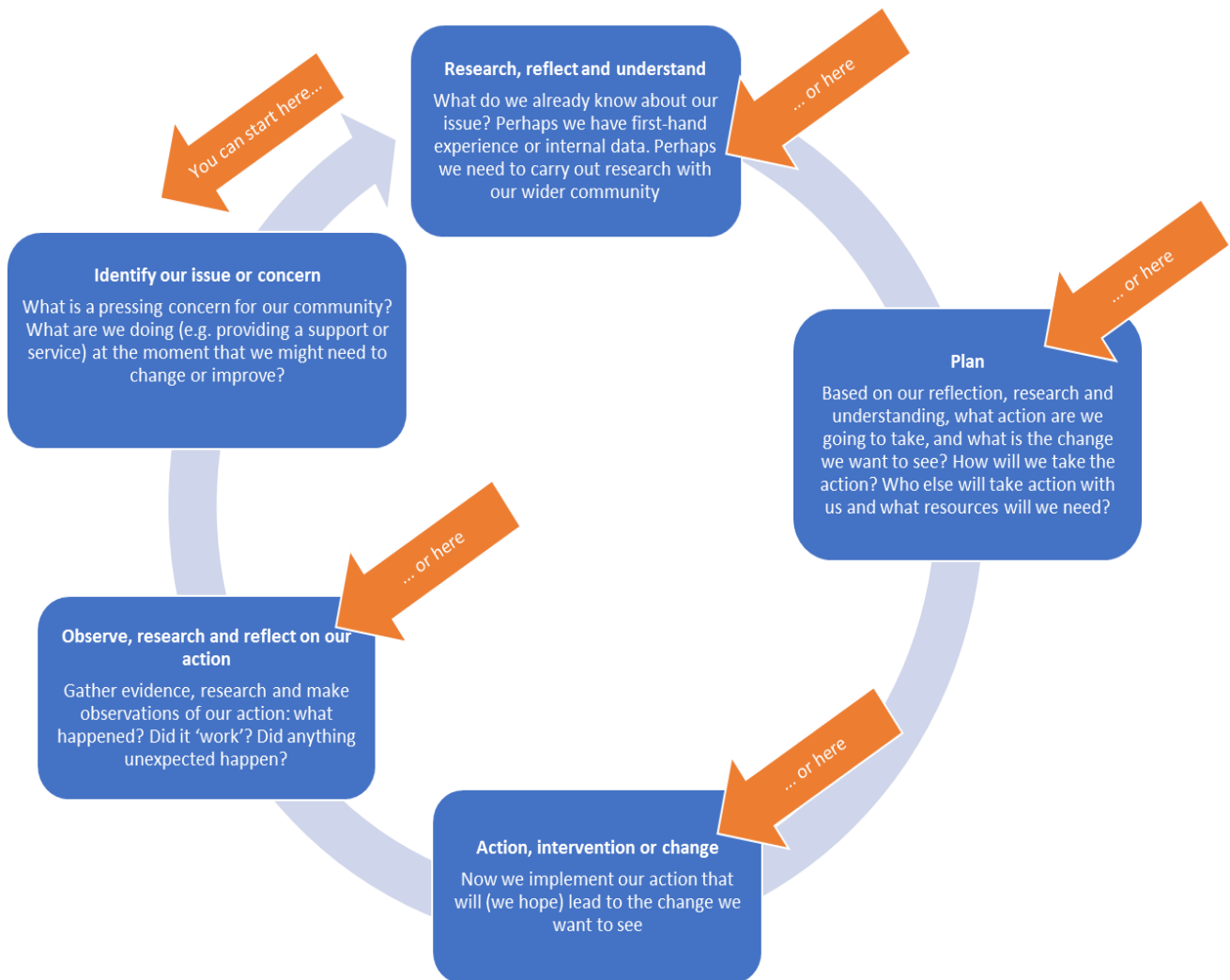
Learning programme (indicative timetable)

No.	STAGE		PARTICIPANTS	TIMEFRAME
1	A welcome and an Introduction to CPAR – and the CPAR Cohort 2 programme.	Mentoring (ongoing throughout course of programme)	Full Cohort	May 2023
2	Agreement – the role of the researchers		Regional Cohorts	June 2023
3	Planning/Choosing Questions		Local Cohorts	September 2023
4	Research Methods/Data collection		Local Cohorts	September/October 2023
	Shared learning		Regional cohorts	Half-day
5	Data Analysis		Local Cohorts	November/January 2024
6	Key Findings		Local Cohorts	February 2024
	Shared learning		Regional cohorts	Half-day
7	Presentation of Findings		Local Cohorts	March /April 2024
8	What Next? Taking Action		Local Cohorts/Full Cohort	April/May 2024 (this will be a continuous thread through the whole programme)

Appendix 3

Research cycle

This is an action-orientated research cycle. Your work can start at any place in this cycle. *Produced by SCDC[‡]*



[‡] Knowledge is Power FAQs: Scottish Community Development Centre