

Community Voices in Health Research Grant Programme

Background

Essex Community Foundation and Suffolk Community Foundation are working in partnership with Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System (SNEE ICS), to fund voluntary and community organisations to be community research champions in Suffolk and North East Essex as part of a Research Engagement Network.

Currently, research participants do not truly reflect the diverse populations and experiences of people in SNEE, but by working in partnership with communities we can understand why that is, what can be done to change it and what principles must be adopted to ensure all future research better reflects and includes all our populations.

SNEE ICS is committed to building a collaborative research infrastructure, based upon solid foundations of engagement and inclusion of diverse communities. The aim is to enable a better understanding of our under-served urban, rural and coastal communities, through asset-based community development and community-led research approaches.

Outcomes of the fund

- Engage with communities and gather insight on research, including the barriers people face to engagement, so that their views can form a set of principles adopted by system partners for future research and to enable greater participation.
- Share research opportunities with the community, this could be through participation or involvement in the shaping the research.
- Establish a SNEE Research Engagement Network to support this work in the longer-term.

There is £75,000 in grants available across Suffolk & North East Essex from the 'Research Engagement Network Development Programme' to support core or project or costs.

As part of the programme, voluntary and community sector organisations that receive grant funding will also undertake training between January and March 2024. There will be 2-3 sessions with the majority being delivered online. The training will support staff and/or volunteers in having conversations with the people you support through your services around several topics, including engaging with research and the benefits of this.

Criteria for North East Essex Charities

To be eligible to apply, charities and community groups must be working in Colchester or Tendring.

Grants of up to £5,000 per organisation are available to enable positive engagement with the communities you work with, and to support your staff and/or volunteers to become Community Research Champions.

You can apply as a single organisation or as a partnership of several organisations. If you apply as a partnership, you can request funding of more than £5,000 in total, but the application is subject to a maximum of £5,000 per organisation.

Things you might wish to include in your application are:

- Staff or volunteer time or expenses that will include participating in the mandatory 'Be Part of Research' training; contributing to the project evaluation being led by Suffolk and Essex Healthwatch; and joining a peer network to share learning
- Delivery of activities where conversations can be held with your communities to gather insight around the barriers and challenges to participating in research
- Communications activities to promote engagement
- Incentives to encourage individuals to engage

Funding can support new or existing activities and **must be spent by 31 March 2024**. Please note, training is likely to take place during January – March 2024. More information about the benefits of taking part in research can be found [here](#).

One of the principles of the Community Voices in Health Research Grant Programme is to enable a system wide approach to sharing learning and building the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to have an active role in supporting communities to engage in research.

Therefore, in addition to the project you wish to deliver, **we also require each organisation to support the following staffing commitments which are all eligible costs for the grant fund.**

- Attending and contributing to a Peer Learning Network – anticipated to be 3 x 90-minute meetings during December 2023 – March 2024
- At least one member of staff to complete the Research Champion training delivered by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) – anticipated to be 3 x 2-hour sessions between December 2023 – March 2024
- Contribute to the development of several Principles that will be adopted by the ICS to help inform future research activity – anticipated to be approximately 6 hours
- Contribute to the project evaluation that will include:
 - supporting the completion of monitoring forms of individuals engaged in the project
 - sharing the learning from delivering the project via a focus group or interview
 - sharing the learning and experience of being a Research Champion via focus group or interview
- Participate in a system learning event to promote the principles and share learning and best practice with wider stakeholders – anticipated to be approximately 4 hours