

Empowering communities to engage in research across Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Research Engagement Network



NHS
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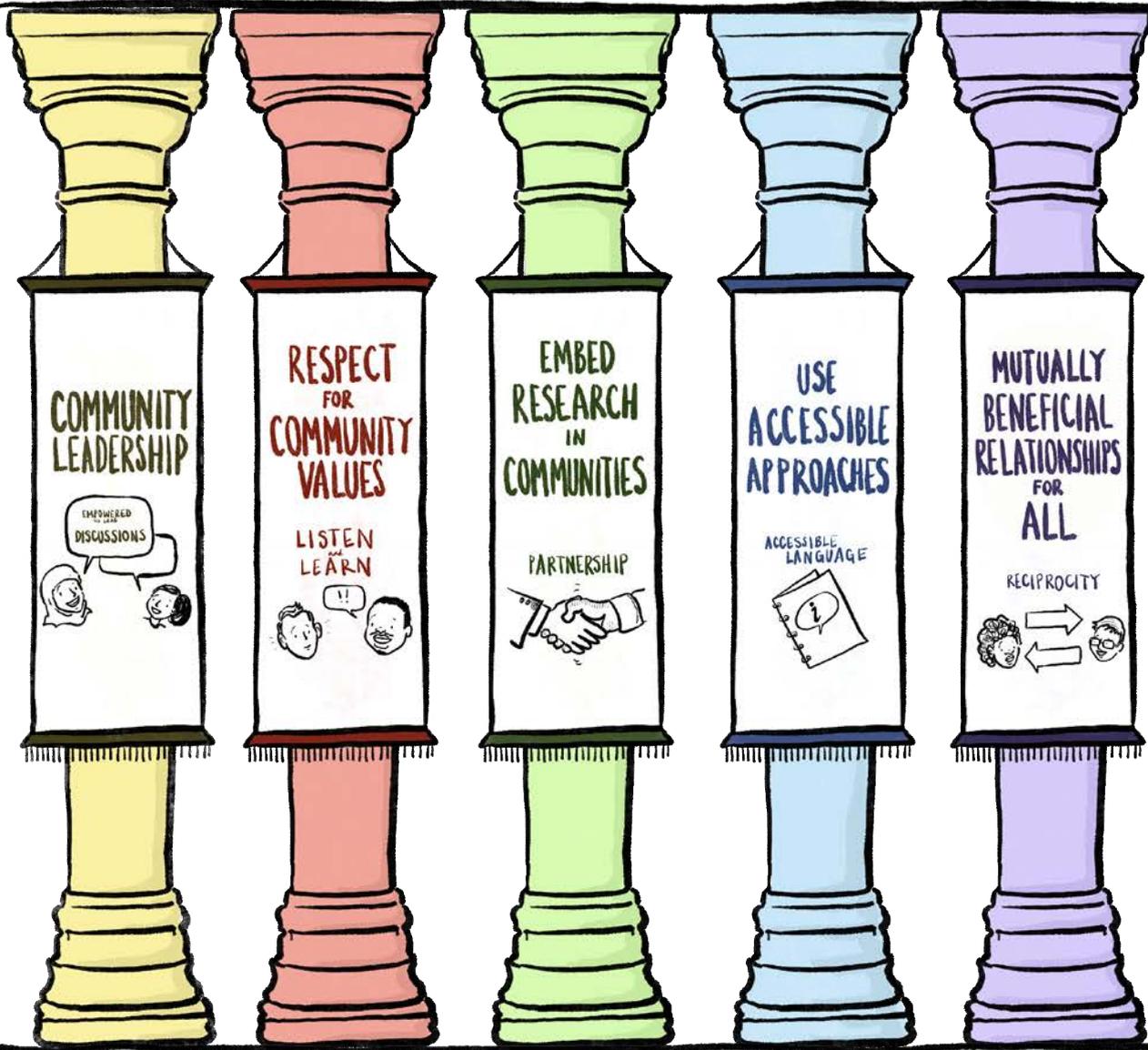
VOCAL Bringing people & research together

CAHN Caribbean & African Health Network

Greater Manchester
VCFSE Leadership Group

THE GREATER MANCHESTER RESPECTFUL RESEARCH CHARTER

Strong, equitable, and respectful partnerships between researchers, the VCFSE sector, and Greater Manchester communities will empower those facing the greatest health challenges to actively participate in and shape research, ultimately leading to fairer health and care for all.



Communities with common shared interests and values supported by Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) groups and community leaders are taking charge of their own health and wellbeing. Researchers should recognise and value community led approaches and work to create mutually beneficial partnerships.



MEANINGFUL RESEARCH ON WHAT MATTERS MOST TO THE PEOPLE IT IS ABOUT & FOR

Create community-based research partnerships between research organisations, VCFSE organisations and community members for ongoing involvement and engagement to ensure research is driven by community need.

Use these partnerships to identify **research priorities that align with the greatest need** and lived experiences of the community. Research priorities do not always match community priorities. Work together to find a common ground.

Take action to understand each other before engagement about research begins. VCFSE organisations and community leaders know their communities well and early engagement with them will support the development of trusted relationships.

Acknowledge and address the **power relationships** that exist between members of the public (particularly those who are vulnerable, discriminated against or marginalised) and researchers/institutions. Share power for equal partnerships.

Set out **mutually agreed and co-developed expectations** of what is achievable being honest about limitations.

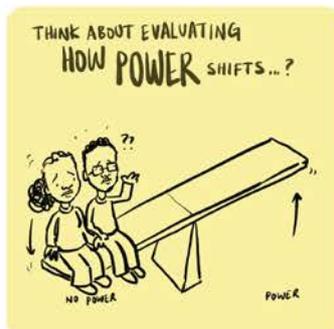
Communities should be **actively involved in the research process**, wherever possible including identifying relevant research questions, the design of a research project and how it is carried out, interpretation of the results and sharing the findings. Doing research in ways people say are important to them.

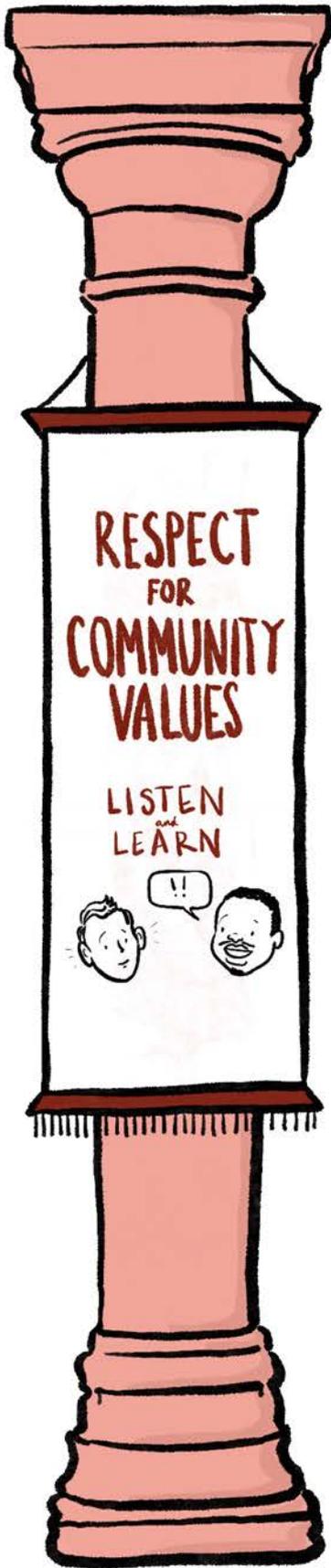
Communities should be **actively involved in research management** regulation, leadership and decision making. Where current governance structures are creating barriers to community involvement work together to remove or reduce these.

Establish ways to create ongoing feedback between research teams, VCFSE organisations and communities **creating long-term partnerships** to capture changing needs and concerns.

Invest in community-based VCFSE organisations to enable them to take a lead role in developing the trusted partnerships needed between researchers and communities.

Take time to identify those who may need extra support to take part in conversations about health and care research, due to mistrust, lack of opportunities or long-standing barriers.





COMMUNITIES KNOW THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS. LISTEN AND LEARN FIRST TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE AND THEIR NEEDS

Listen and learn first to understand cultural, religious and racial sensitivities. Use community experts to guide understanding. Don't be afraid to question what you do not know.

Give **respect to cultural norms**, traditions and values throughout the research process, adapting approaches accordingly.

Involve trusted experts and sources in conversations about community needs.

Create an agreed and shared way of working between research teams, VCFSE organisations/ community leaders that **addresses community needs**. Research processes should not start until this agreement is in place.

Address language and communication barriers by providing relatable translation services; delivering study materials in participants preferred language and preferred and accessible formats.

Provide/ access **cultural competence training** to enhance understanding of the unique cultural, historical and social context of diverse communities.

Acknowledge and **address past mistakes** where communities have had a poor experience of research to reverse the balance of power and perceived hierarchies.

Involving different generations from the same household may support some people to get involved, but ask first.

Acknowledge that individuals have **multiple layers of identity** and are members of many different communities every individual has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression.





DEVELOP LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND COMMUNITIES, FOSTERING TRUST and COLLABORATION FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Create long term **community-led partnerships** between researchers, VCFSE organisations and community leaders that are mutually beneficial and foster trust and an ongoing dialogue.

Ensure that **communication is community-led**, honest and transparent to bridge the gulf that communities may feel when engaging due to historical experiences.

Invest in **Community Research Champions** and embedded peer researchers as equal partners in research teams, providing recognition and reward for their time and access to resources.

Invest in and recognise the importance of the role that the **VCFSF organisation/Community Leaders** have in creating trusted links to communities in greatest need. Recognition needs to be given to the time this takes and remuneration and resources provided as equal partner in the research team.

The **strength of communities** and their expertise is recognised and invested in, including funding for community venues to hold discussions about health, wellbeing and research in community settings.

Opportunities for community groups to become involved in research projects of importance to them should be clearly communicated by research organisations in a coordinated way to avoid over saturation of opportunities in some areas and large gaps in others.





COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Relevant **information** about taking part in health and care research is provided in a format that is understandable to those it is intended for and communicated in a timely manner.

Address **language and communication needs** at the outset and provide adequate resources to meet these needs.

Take time to establish the **best forms of communication** for individuals and groups – one size does not fit all.

Avoid the use of **acronyms, jargon or technical language** wherever possible or provide an explanation of the meaning of these terms where using them cannot be avoided.

Create partnerships with community experts to better understand **community languages**, partner with community members able to speak and translate information and messages in culturally appropriate ways.

Put an agreement in place and adhere to it on **how language is used** and what terms are used to avoid misunderstanding, confusion and offence.

Make **venues and meetings spaces accessible** for everyone who wants to be involved and right for the community. Extra consideration needs to be given to those with additional support needs due to mobility, hearing, sight or other sensory needs.

Make sure the **time and length of meetings** are agreed together. The format of meetings/ workshops needs to be inclusive. What works for one group may not work for another. Be flexible and adapt to the needs of those attending. Make additional arrangements to include those not able to attend on the day.

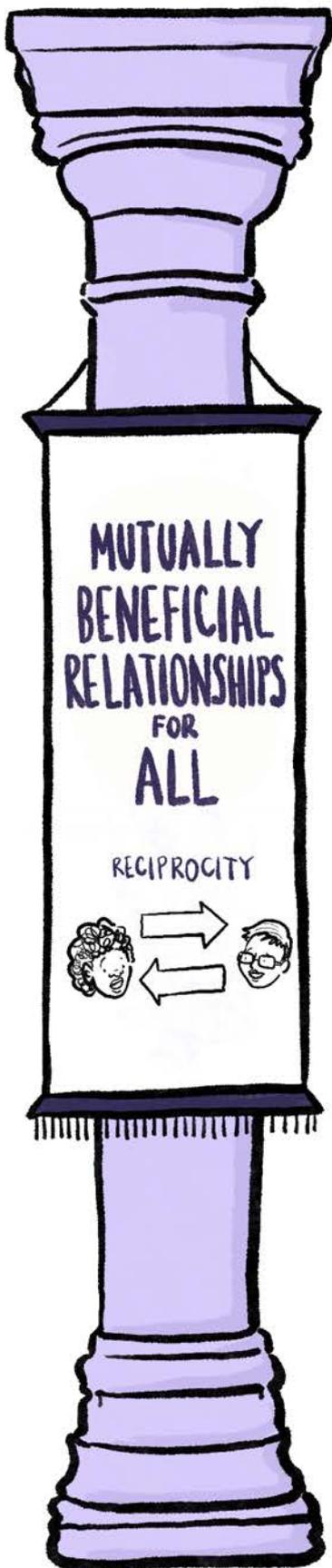
Ensure people are **not digitally excluded from participating** because they cannot access a smart phone or computer. Use alternative forms of communication to support inclusion.

Provide safe spaces where sensitive information is being shared and engage trusted members of the community to support conversations where appropriate.

Give priority to the **well-being and safety of individuals** and signpost to psychological support where trauma may be experienced by those who take part.

The use of **creative approaches** such as music, theatre and crafts may help break down barriers between those running engagement events and those taking part.





WORKING TOGETHER

IN A WAY THAT REWARDS & VALUES CONTRIBUTIONS, BUILDING SUSTAINABLE, MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL AND PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Create partnerships based on **equality** where everyone's role is equal and valued.

Acknowledge that **reciprocity** is a core part of building trusted relationships. There needs to be mutual benefit for everyone in the partnership.

Provide **adequate and timely reimbursement** for the time of individuals, VCFSSE organisations and community groups as equal partners.

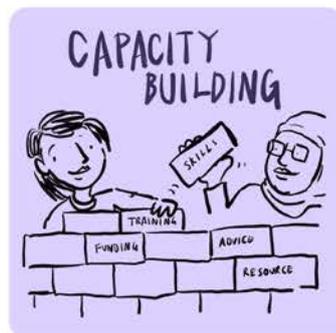
Build **reward and recognition** into partnerships and funding bids. Appreciation and thanks should be a part of all activity.

Provide feedback on what happened and the difference it made to the research and those who took part.

Listen to feedback on the experiences of communities who took part and use this feedback to improve future ways of working.

Share **support and learning opportunities** with communities to build their confidence and skills to be involved in research.

Openly **exchange skills and knowledge** within communities and between organisations to support positive inclusive research involvement for all.



Empowering communities to engage in research across Greater Manchester

In Greater Manchester we want the research we do to be accessible and meaningful to our diverse communities.

We want to empower those facing the greatest health challenges to actively participate in and shape research that will lead to fairer health and care for all.

This requires strong, equitable and respectful partnerships between researchers, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and Greater Manchester's diverse communities. Our Respectful Research Charter sets out our mission that builds partnerships based on mutual respect and benefit for all.



“This activity was funded through the ICS Research Engagement Network (REN) development programme. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of NHS England or the Department of Health and Social Care”.