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 Sessional Community Researcher

**For Research Engagement Network (REN) Programme**

**Guidance Notes 2024**

**Overview**

**Could you be a Community Researcher?**

**Are you passionate about addressing local health inequalities and do you strive to create positive change for your community?**

Join our growing **REBALANCE** Research Engagement Network. REBALANCE stands for *‘Research Building Alliances for Action with Community Enterprise’*.

We need your help to improve involvement and representation in health and care research of under-served communities in Derby and Derbyshire. This is needed to ensure that research findings are widely applicable and help to address inequalities, not contribute to them.

As a Sessional Community Researcher, you will represent your community, engage with research processes and development opportunities and help in delivering key health and research messages. You should be passionate about the benefits of heath and care research to reduce inequalities.

You will support a specific REBLANCE Network identified project on health inequalities and cultural competencies. This project has a particular focus on Race and Ethnicity. This means you will be working with communities such as Black, Asian and other Minority communities who may be affected by cultural bias and inequalities in their experience of health and care services.

You will support research activities which have been agreed with Community Action Derby and the lead NHS partner organisation before sharing with your communities.

Key roles for the Community Researchers include:

* Be an active member of research projects and activities as part of the REBALANCE network.
* Engage with local communities to identify health and research issues that are important to them.
* Share learning from local communities with partner organisations to inform research planning, design, and delivery to address health and care issues.
* Actively promote the importance of health and care research and the opportunities to participate in research programmes.
* Support health and care research events, workshops, and presentations (both face-to-face and online).
* Raise awareness of health messages and research and engagement opportunities.

**What does ‘under-served’ mean?**

For this network, an under-served community refers to populations that face barriers and challenges in accessing and using heath and care services and are also under-represented in health and care research. This may be due to race and cultural heritage, geographic location, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity. Under-served populations can experience challenges such as language and cultural barriers, physical and/or cognitive ability, citizenship status, or age.

**What is a Community Researcher?**A Community Researcher involves working alongside communities to speak to individuals and groups, identifying the key issues affecting them or the community and seeing where practical solutions or changes can be accomplished. The research will envision a participatory and action focused approach. This means communities are at the centre of this approach from the beginning till the end.

As a Community Researcher you will be responsible for working flexibly to deliver and manage key research activities and programmes in support of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities in Derby City. Sessional Community Researchers are passionate about addressing local health inequalities and strive to create positive change for their community.

**Specific duties:** The Sessional Community Researcher will work within under-served communities to provide expertise, guidance and assistance with conducting various research activities in the local community.

Project aims:

* Build trusted relationships with local communities, groups and partner organisations.
* Be trained and supported to conduct community research in the local area to better understand the community.
* Work together with community members, groups and partner organisations to review community research findings and plan activities that will increase local access to health and care research.
* Work in partnership with community and partner organisations to implement planned activities to build trust and raise awareness, improve access, and enable participation in research to reduce and prevent local health inequalities.
* Encourage maximum participation in clinical research and signpost community members to opportunities to participate in research both locally and nationally and seek referrals from appropriate agencies and partners.
* Be responsible for the implementation of policies and procedures as per organisational guidance, including safeguarding and equal opportunities.
* Liaise with the project team and access line management to ensure that the work is of high quality and meets the expectations of funders and Integrated Care System partners.
* Undertake relevant training and personal development as required to keep up to date with current issues and improve the general standard of work delivery.
* Attend project meetings and supervision sessions as required.

**Funding available:**

This funding is open to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.

The funding will be administered through Community Action Derby. Funding is available for a representative of one or more specific under-served community groups to be the link or connector to the community groups in the role of Community Researcher.

Through the Sessional Community Researcher Grant, Community Action Derby wants to work with VCSE, community members and organisations to:

* Forge stronger relationships with local communities.
* Develop and deliver sessions in the heart of Derby City’s communities.
* Engage with wider community groups to raise awareness about cultural competency.
* To increase diversity in health research participation as part of the REN programme.

**Training and Support of Community Researchers**Training and support will be provided through Community Action Derby and relevant partner organisations.

**Induction programme for new starters** will cover the following:

* Meeting different partners/networks/other community researchers
* Understanding the aims of the REBALANCE project and why it is important
* Introduction to health and care research and principles of good clinical practice in research
* Personal development plans for any individualised needs
* Planned regular group and individual supervision
* Peer group meetings.

Practical skills and knowledge development through training, shadowing and practice sessions as required **to deliver specific activities**:

* Community asset mapping.
* Facilitating small focus group sessions or conduct interviews around key issues.
* Participatory research and evaluation.
* Survey design, promotion, results interpretation, disseminating findings and implementing change actions.
* Qualitative information gathering through focus group discussions and interviews.
* Introduction to quality improvement.
* Learning about specific research activities and projects to share these with communities such as Join Dementia Research.
* Learning about specific topics as they arise e.g. health inequalities.

Performance will be measured by working towards project outcomes and other responsibilities may arise as the project evolves.

# About the Grants

Community Action Derby (CA) is administering the Sessional Community Researcher Grants on behalf of Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Research Engagement Network (REN). CA is looking to engage with a wide network of community-based organisations.

# Funding

Individuals can apply for a maximum of £2,000 to cover all costs associated to the project. This will need to include DBS checks for the Community Researcher. It could include expenses to deliver the agreed research activity such as travel costs, additional training, costs towards room hire, equipment and refreshments if needed.

# Who can apply

This fund is open to individuals that can meet the charitable objectives of the programme and who would be interested in 'scaling up' their current provision of work to involve research. Priority will be given to Community Connectors supporting DHIP (Derby Health Inequalities Partnership).

#  When to apply

The following process will be followed:

**EOI process opens by:** Tuesday 2nd April 2024

**Deadline for applications:** Tuesday 23rd April 2024

**Grants Awarded:** By end of April 2024 (subject to approval for individuals and due diligence process)

**Project Start Date**: 01/05/2024

**Project End Date:** 31/12/2024

**Project Training Date (online):** 24/04/2024

**Grant Criteria**

Community Action Derby will ensure that there is a transparent and fair process for assessing the EOI via this grant application and local knowledge of working in Derby.

Factors that will be considered in the assessment of the application include:

* + Ability to deliver aims and objectives as described above.
	+ Ability to complete monitoring information as required.
	+ Knowledge of developing community partnership.
	+ Knowledge of community engagement
	+ Ability to participate in induction and training (see below).

Also, the ability to meet the criteria listed below:

**Experience: Essential**

E1. Be at least 16yrs old

E2. Live in Derby City

E3. Lived experience or awareness of issues affecting Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority communities

E4. Experience of working with Black and culturally diverse individuals or groups in a compassionate and empowering way

**Skills: Essential**

S1. Computer literate

S2. Evidence of a good level of education

S3. Good at engaging and connecting with people

S4. Proactive with strong organisational and good communication skills to communicate with people from a variety of social, cultural, and professional backgrounds

S5. The ability to work as part of a team or independently

S6. Flexibility in working patterns e.g., weekends and evenings as required

**Skills: Desirable**

S7. Ability to speak and/or write another language spoken locally

**Knowledge & Understanding: Essential**

K1. Understanding of the importance of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

K2. Openness to new ideas and flexibility in relation to ways of working and times of working

**Willingness to undertake DBS clearance**

Every applicant will be made aware of our existing policy and practice on safeguarding vulnerable people and makes a copy available on request. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar any job applicant. It will depend on the nature of the position, the circumstances and background of the offences committed.

**References**

References will be used to support the appointment of a candidate.

The assessment will be made by a panel that have an overview of how the grant bids align with other services available in the city, including how diversity issues are being addressed and the views of service users.

# How will grants be administered to successful organisations?

* A single payment will be administered on completion of due diligence and return of the signed grant agreement (subject to approval)
* The invoicing and administration will be discussed and agreed with each successful applicant.

# How long will it take to find out if I have been successful with my application?

Following the submission of a completed grant application, we aim to evaluate and confirm whether your application has been successful by the end of April 2024.

# What reporting and management information will you need from me if I am successful?

Providers will be required to regularly complete and submit monitoring and evaluation forms during and upon completion of the project. CA will supply templates to successful organisations. Information will include but is not limited to:

* + Numbers of eligible individuals supported, and vulnerable groups represented.
	+ Details of activities provided/meetings or events attended, including dates.
	+ Number of attendees.
	+ Community/population groups involved and information on characteristics (age, ethnicity, gender, disabilities).
	+ Participants’ feedback, issues raised and including a minimum of 1 case study.
	+ Learning and reflections
	+ Completion of Workbook.

It is essential monitoring is completed monthly or as agreed with group support staff from Community Action Derby. The monitoring information will be provided at the induction day and should be returned using the monitoring form provided by CA, or in a written format that includes the above information. All monitoring information should be for activity that takes place between **April and May 2024.**

# Training and induction day

Providers must attend an induction day and will be required to complete an induction and basic mandatory training in person.

# Financial reporting will include:

* + A breakdown of expenditure.
	+ A breakdown of any unspent grant.

Any funding issued by CA will include a grant agreement setting out our expectations of organisations in accepting grant funding. Any unspent grant funding will have to be returned to CA within 30 days of the end of the grant period. If CA has any grounds for suspecting financial irregularity in the use of any grant paid under this grant agreement, an investigation will take place. For these purposes, ‘financial irregularity’ includes fraud or other impropriety, mismanagement, and the use of a grant for purposes other than those for which it was provided.

# Conditions of funding

The organisation will have to sign a funding agreement. The funding agreement will be based on the information you have provided in the application form and any additional details that CA negotiates with your organisation. We need the funding agreement to ensure that CA and the organisation are both clear about what CA expects from the service and what the organisation can expect from CA.

If the organisation is successful in their application, CA reserves the option to delay providing funding until a preliminary check of the organisation has taken place. As part of the preliminary check, CA will request any additional evidence to ensure that the service is safe for service users and/or is sustainable. We need this information to:

* + Confirm if the details provided in the application form are correct.
	+ Confirm that the organisation has the potential or ability to deliver the service as described in the application form and in the funding agreement.
	+ Confirm that the policies provided by the group are appropriate to the service for which

the organisation is being funded.

# Equality in the community

CA believes in equality of opportunity. We will make sure that all organisations have fair access to our grants. We also want organisations who get grants from us to have a commitment to, and to actively promote, equal opportunities. We are committed to the Anti-Racism Alliance and have committed to its six pledges.

# Health and safety risk assessment

We need to know if your project or service is delivering safe services that will not put your service users, volunteers, or staff at risk. We are aware that different services will need to consider different safety issues - we need you to describe how you will manage health and safety.

# Safeguarding (young people and vulnerable adults):

* + CA will ensure that vulnerable young people and adults who are accessing grant aided services are doing so in a safe environment.
	+ A vulnerable adult is someone who is aged 18 years and over, who is in receipt of, or may be in need of, community care services by reason of mental health issues, or other disability, age, or illness. This also includes individuals who may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
	+ Safeguarding of vulnerable adults is very important to us, and we want to ensure that organisations that we fund make appropriate arrangements to ensure that services and activities provided take due care to protect people. Organisations are also required to promote the welfare of all individuals that are expected to benefit from the project, particularly young people and vulnerable adults.
	+ CA expects services who are grant funded to comply with the Derby Safeguarding Adults Procedures and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
	+ CA will expect organisations to confirm and evidence (where required) that all necessary staff/ volunteers working on the project will have the appropriate Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check.

# If you have any further questions, these can be directed to Ailya Habib via email:

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