

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 17 January 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Annmarie Allt, Research Engagement Officer,
NIHR Clinical Research Network

PORTFOLIO: Health & Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Research Ready Community Project

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To deliver a presentation to members of the Board on the Research Ready Community Champion Power in Partnership Project (PIP) based in Grangeway Community Centre in Halton and PIP Alcock Street Runcorn site locations.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board note the presentation.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Research Ready Communities programme (RRC) aims to increase equitable access to health research amongst under-represented groups. During 2021 – 22, The network took part in a competitive funding call that resulted in three sites being selected to pilot the Research Ready Communities programme: Blackpool, Brixton, and Doncaster. After the successful completion of the pilot sites, the programme has now expanded. The National Institute for Health and Care Research Clinical Research Network (NIHR CRN) Northwest Coast (NWC) has now recruited a group of 6 young adults who are part of the Research Ready Community in Halton, they are based in Runcorn.
- 3.2 Supported by NIHR CRN NWC and Power in Partnerships (PIP) the young adults who are all care leavers, are part of a national programme to help build better relationships with communities that are currently under-served by health and care research, to increase access to health and care research opportunities.
- 3.3 Our Research Ready Community Project in Halton commenced in June 2023, we have successfully recruited 6 Research Ready Community Champions who all live locally and a NIHR Research Engagement Officer, who is the project lead. Our aim is to work together collaboratively with Power in Partnership, and a multitude of local organisations to reduce health inequalities that impact them

where they live, by making our research opportunities more accessible to their local communities. Our champions worked co – productively to identify 6 areas of health that they agreed affected them the most which we agreed to focus on, they included:

- Isolation and Loneliness
- Diabetes and its complications
- Managing Heart Conditions
- Addiction (Alcohol, drugs, gambling)
- Depression, mental health and wellbeing
- Sexual Health support.

3.4 Local partner agencies include PIP (Power in Partnership) NHS, Halton Borough Council, NIHR Northwest Coast, Local businesses in Halton, Healthwatch Halton, Warrington and Halton lived experience team to name but just a few.

3.5 Everyone who takes part in health research will learn more about their own health and will help improve care for everybody. It is important to take our research opportunities right into the heart of our underserved communities so they have the chance to make sure that the health research answers the health questions they care about. One way we can achieve this outcome is by using our Research Bus, 'Kitty' from which our team can provide information and conduct research. Using Kitty on site at Grangeway 30 members of the public took part in Liverpool Universities i Detect - AF study, members of the local community and the champions were able to access a 'Free Lifestyle' check incorporating, taking their blood pressure, measuring their heart beats, height, weight and BMI. This study was fully supported by the Research Champions, who helped in promoting the research study opportunity.

3.6 In August 2023 our PIP champions had the opportunity to go to Halton Clinical Research Unit (HCRU) and talk to the NIHR research team about working together and they had some early discussions about how they might be able to work with young care leavers in research in a more positive way. This will be explored further in future work.

3.7 Annie Allt, a Research Engagement Officer for the CRN said, *“Our young volunteers have taken their first steps to become a NIHR Research Ready Community Power in Partnership Champions and meeting all our different partner organisations in real life, where they live, is a start to learning more about health research, so we can work co productively to reduce health inequalities in their community.”*

3.8 The Champions have developed further by working with the Research Ready Programme and have attended meetings with Senior Health Professionals from the local NHS. There is a lot more

work to be done but the 6 Champions have had the opportunity to share their lived experience to assist organisations to make the changes needed to improve their lives.

- 3.9 The journey so far has been captured by commissioning a short film to provide a snapshot of what our NIHR Research Ready PIP Champions have achieved since they became Champions. The young adults range from age 18 to 23. This short film will be available to view during the HWBB meeting.

BACKGROUND

- 3.10 A participatory-based learning framework was designed and shared with three Local Clinical Research Networks (LCRNs) to use during a 12-month period. The framework provided the tools to start engaging with a local under-served community, with a view to building meaningful, long-term engagement that would extend beyond the pilot phase of the programme. The programme contained 4 main phases of activity:

1. Building partnerships

The Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre supported three LCRNs to pilot the programme in 1 of their local communities. The aim of the pilot was to understand if the programme could be delivered and how it might work differently in under-served communities with diverse populations.

2. Community research

The CRN Coordinating Centre provided free training to 9 Community Champions with two 1.5 hour online sessions, and one full day face-to-face training.

3. Co-producing a plan

The CRN Coordinating Centre organised a full day workshop for Community Champions and their LCRN programme leads, to reflect on their community research activities. These findings were then used to inform the co-production of activities in each local community.

Community research findings

- Some people were not aware that health and care research was happening in their local area, or how to access studies.
- Overall, there was limited awareness about health research in local communities and about how participating in research can help to improve health outcomes and quality of life.
- Community members felt that research should be based on

the particular needs of the local community.

- The need to build a higher level of trust between communities and researchers was important to community members.

4. Community activities

These were piloted in Blackpool, Brixton and Doncaster. Blackpool created a series of four work streams to upskill 16 young professionals in different areas of research. Brixton organised wellbeing sessions for migrant women which talked about health and care research and Doncaster set up two research awareness raising events.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The National Institute for Health and Care Research Clinical Research Network (NIHR CRN) provided funding for the programme to the Public Health team who worked with the Research Engagement Officer to identify the research champions.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Commissioned services supports the Council's priorities for Children and Young People.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Commissioned services supports the Council's priorities for a Healthy Halton.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.
