Working with community researchers - Healthwatch Oxfordshire

The wider issues faced

COVID 19 highlighted long standing and entrenched inequalities in health, particularly among some black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

We know seldom heard communities face barriers of information, culture and language, impacting on access and participation to health and care services, and exacerbating inequalities in health

Many communities say they are 'research tired' and cannot always see the benefits of giving their views.

Policy points to engaging communities on a more equal footing. Public Health England report (2020) makes recommendations including to 'support community participatory research' to begin to address these insures.

The issues we will focus on

relationship,

recognition

and support

Supporting research skills Reachina development of community seldom heard esearchers fron seldom heard and voices enabling through communities to aise issues, actio approaches and areas of based on their lived respect. experience. oartnership action,

Supporting access and dialogue for these communities to speak to health system commissioners and

providers.

Using an approach that requires us to be able to adapt, change, experiment and take risks.

Work areas

Recruit, train, mentor and reimburse community researchers from seldom heard communities.

Activities

Support development of creative, participatory research through skills development for community researchers working with communities.

Research process stages: design, data gathering, analysis, reporting and dissemination - all involving communities.

Link communities with health and care system for early dialogue and dissemination of what is heard.

Feedback to communities at all stages and focus on action and change.

Inputs

Dedicated staff time to train, support and mentor

Community researcher

Engaged community groups (of interest, location, culture etc).

Internal support: IT, GDPR and safeguarding, policies admin time, comms.

Equipment: e.g. phone, email and survey access voice recorder.

Budget: for reimbursement of researcher and participating community, events, interpreters and other costs.

Additional project budg e.g. if making film.

Short and medium-term outcomes

We've supported and developed Community
Researchers in the skills of project development, research and engaging the community.

Community.

Communities are enabled to focus on issues key to them, and to identify steps to change and action.

including those seldom heard, are supported to speak in their own voice, in their own way to health and care system partners.

Healthwatch our connections are supported to the support of the support of

Healthwatch has used our connections to link community researcher with relevant system service commissioners and providers – building relationships and gaining influence.

Healthwatch has used committees by Healthwatch with communities to your committees by Healthwatch with communities.

Increased likelihood of recommendations and calls to action from research being responded to by system / services, as Healthwatch alongside the community publish, monitor and challenge

progress.

Communities have a new direct relationship with the health and care system.

Previously seldom heard voices continue to directly influence services on an ongoing basis.

A shift in power has occurred as Healthwatch is not needed to facilitate the ongoing relationship.

Individuals working within commissioner and provider organisations have experienced the power of the approach and are committed to it.

Confidence and trust in the research process progressively grow within communities

Output from

alongside.

Long-term outcomes

The wider impact

Changes in services from design to delivery involve those communities most affected and seldom heard.

Services reflect the needs of all communities.

Examples of service improvements are increasingly available to demonstrate the value of community researchers.

Community researcher approach is embedded at 'place' and within Integrated Care System (ICS) in their focus on tackling health inequalities and ensuring seldom heard voices are able to participate and be heard.

Addressing inequalities in health and care through bringing community concerns and perspectives to the forefront through the recognition of an asset-based approach including expertise, skills, and knowledge

in communities.

A 'pool' of trained community researchers is established that the 'system' is able to work with to continue to hear the voice of communities.