

Research Ready Communities East Sussex- Phase 2

In 2024, East Sussex County Council's [Research Collaborative Hub](#) (RCH) received funding from the [Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership](#) and the [Research Engagement Network](#) to continue their research engagement work with voluntary sector organisations based in East Sussex. This work intended to build on the outcomes from a previous workshop that was delivered in September 2024, with the aim of

- Helping voluntary sector organisations, and the communities they work with, to get involved in existing health and care research
- Providing voluntary sector organisations, and their communities, with the knowledge, skills and tools to conduct research themselves

After a co-production session with representatives from the involved voluntary sector organisations, it was decided that this next phase of work would aim to take participants on a journey through the different stages of the research cycle. Bespoke research training webinars were provided during February and March 2025, on topics including grey literature searching and using evaluation toolkits to demonstrate impact. This work then culminated in a two day in-person research workshop, in Hastings, at the end of March 2025. Over the course of the two days, speakers included academics with experience or working for universities and community organisations; a professional from the [South East Regional Research Delivery Network](#) and a community researcher from [Diversity Resource International](#). Topics covered during the workshop included

- Designing a research question
- Research methods
- How can you help your communities benefit from existing health and care research
- Designing a community research study
- Communicating research ideas
- Experiences of a community researcher

Across all sessions provided, a total of 11 participants attended from seven different voluntary sector organisations based across East Sussex. All participants that provided feedback either agreed or strongly agreed that the workshop broadened their knowledge of health and care research, and that they found it engaging. Most participants also

agreed that the workshop broadened their research skills. All participants that fed back also strongly agreed that they would be interested in attending future research workshops.

'[I enjoyed] meeting others who are trying to create a research ready community'

Possible next steps are

- Delivering an online session on funding opportunities led by the University of Brighton.
- Linking the organisations into the RCH, Public Health teams and the University of Brighton by providing key contacts. When community organisations have a research question they wish to take forward, or funding they wish to apply for, they could contact the RCH for advice/support.
- Inviting community organisations to any remaining RCH training sessions where appropriate.
- Public Health team will explore future opportunities for collaborative working (in a research context) with the community organisations involved in this initiative.

