

EXPLORING A POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP for RESEARCH

A CONVERSATION GUIDE...

GOOD TO
MEET
you



for VCSE SECTOR and
RESEARCH-BASED PARTNERS

The purpose of this guide is to support initial conversations between organisations in the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector and researchers with the aim of ensuring key areas are considered and talked through at an early stage.

What is research?

Research is the process of creating new knowledge and/or using existing knowledge in a new way to generate new ideas and ways of understanding.

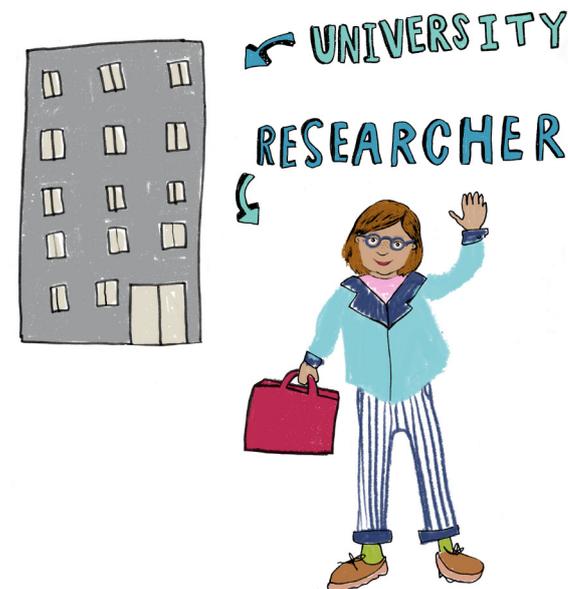
A researcher is the person who carries out this research and is usually linked to an academic institution (e.g. a university or teaching hospital).



Relationships between VCSE organisations and researchers can be positive for all involved; in our region we have learned that this is most likely when carefully thought out and open conversations are held around important aspects of the relationship and ways of working together.



Community organisations often have links to communities where involvement in research is historically poor, for example ethnically marginalised communities and young people. Therefore, they can be gateways to reaching more diverse participants.



We hope this guide supports you to have a helpful conversation!

Important to remember



It is important that a relationship/partnership feels a good 'fit' for all of the partners involved. Be open to the possibility that an initial conversation will be just that; it's ok and helpful to say no to an opportunity that is not a good fit.



Consider agreeing time for everyone involved to reflect on an initial conversation before partners decide if working together in partnership is a good idea.



Preparation ahead of initial conversation

Building trust in communities is vital so it is important for researchers to prepare ahead of these conversations. They should be aware of any sensitivities within the community and any trigger words to avoid. Holding the meeting at a community venue and being flexible with times to meet can help to build trust.



COMMUNITY



Areas we suggest are important to cover in early conversation



What is the research topic or question, and how does this relate to the interests and/or the needs of the community, group and/or VCSE organisation?

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What is the role of the VCSE organisation or the specific community in the research?

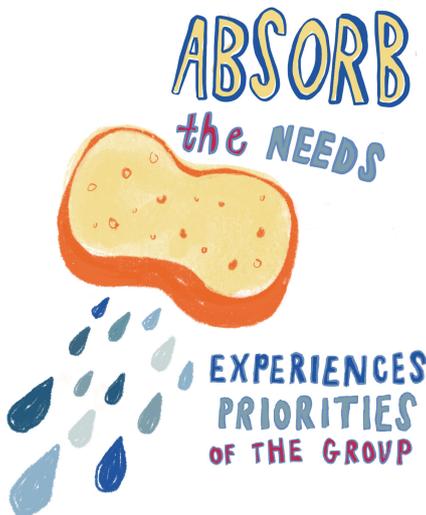
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Where has the research topic or question come from? (It may have been set by central Government, funders, informed by a previous project etc, but it's helpful to be transparent and to set the parameters of who are the interested stakeholders)

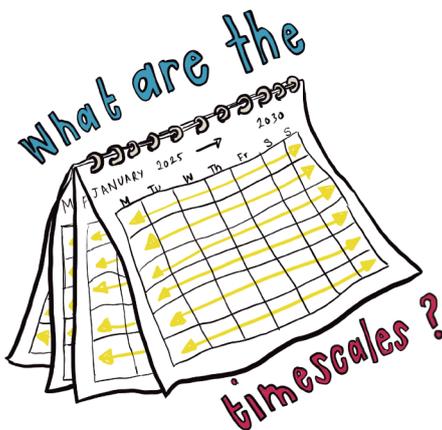
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What are the timescales involved (for the initial agreement/involvement/for the whole project to be completed)?

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What resources are available to support involvement, and how will the involvement of community members and any VCSE staff time involved (where relevant) be remunerated?

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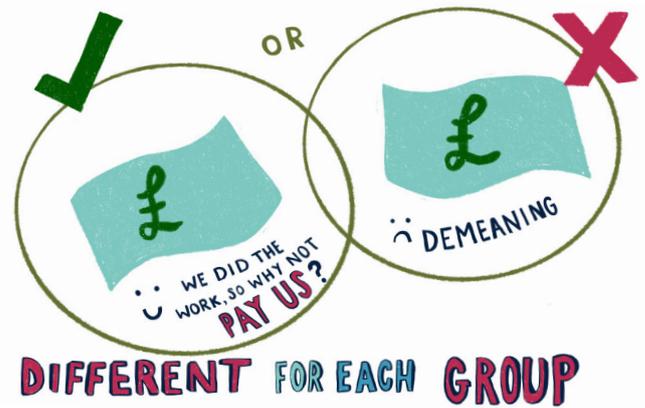
What would the distribution and publication of the research look like? Will feedback on the research be given to the VCSE organisation and communities involved?

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Are the research team aware of the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) payment for public involvement guidance?

YES **OR** **NO**

The NIHR payment for public involvement guidance should be seen as a starting point for discussing reward and recognition. Discussing how community partners would like to be remunerated is helpful and being clear that any monetary remuneration may affect tax and welfare benefits.



In what other ways could the researcher give back to the community/group/VCSE organisation?

VCSE organisations and communities often share their knowledge and expertise with researchers, but do not experience any direct benefit from doing so. It is important to avoid partnerships that do this and instead give back to the organisation and/or community to show appreciation for their involvement in the research. This establishes partnerships that benefit everyone involved.

Examples include:



- **Delivering an information session on a health topic of interest to the community**
(Example: a researcher at Newcastle University delivered an information session on dementia to a community group, which helped build trust with the group to support a research project)
- **Providing an advice session for the VCSE on their impact/evaluation work**
- **Delivering an introductory workshop on a research method or approach such as qualitative methods of research, searching for research evidence, or developing a Theory of Change**
- **Providing a session about careers in health and care research**
- **Providing advice on writing funding bids or evidence reports**
- **Volunteering at an event or activity**
- **Becoming a Trustee**
- **Utilising their network of contacts or department/institution in order to find expertise that that would be useful to the community/group/VCSE organisation**



What are the anticipated results of the research, and what are the timelines for these?

What results would be useful to the community/VCSE organisation and is it possible to produce these?

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How will the research findings be shared?
Accessibility should be considered here. Can a report, summary or other resource that is of value to the VCSE organisation or community be produced?

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Make sure the timeline for this is discussed and agreed.

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Can co-production be involved in every stage of the research?

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Glossary

Co-production

A way of working that involves communities in equal partnership, where power is shared from the start to the end of the project and everyone's skills and knowledge are valued.

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

Funds, enables and delivers health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing.

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)

Research that is done 'with' or 'by' patients and members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. This means the public can inform and shape research.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences.

Theory of Change

Framework that explains how a specific program or intervention is expected to lead to a desired outcome.

Trustee

A volunteer on a Board of Trustees responsible for the governance and running of a charity.



Notes