North East and North Cumbria VCSE Research Partnerships

# Partnering with communities for health & wellbeing research

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## Plan

- Why communities & research?
- The role of the voluntary, community & social enterprise (VCSE) sector
- Support available from VONNE
- NIHR Community Engagement Toolkit
- Some key learning & reflections







## Communities, VCSEs and research

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) defines public involvement in research as research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. It is an active partnership between patients, carers and members of the public with researchers that influences and shapes research.

Communities and community based/VCSE organisations can support research in several ways

**Involvement** / advisory roles - shaping the research

**Participation** in research – helping reach participants

**Engagement** with research findings – sharing research knowledge









## The VCSE sector & health and care research

## VCSE organisations have an important role to play

- Delivering a significant proportion of health and care support and services
- Valuable knowledge of health and care needs and related concerns
- Trusted relationships
- Skills and expertise in engaging with communities

## Research and evaluation also offer VCSE organisations opportunities to

- Gather information to inform service developments
- Provide evidence to communicate to funders and others about their services
- Articulate the breadth and relevance of their contribution to key decision-makers









# Experiences of VCSE – research partnerships

## For researchers For communities & VCSE organisations Limitations on time, resources and/or Researchers 'dipping in & out' No feedback – what difference did the experience in working with communities research make? Lack of reciprocity and remuneration Difficulty finding and/or connecting Overwhelmed with research requests with communities or Not aware of / involved in research Reliance on tried and tested connections

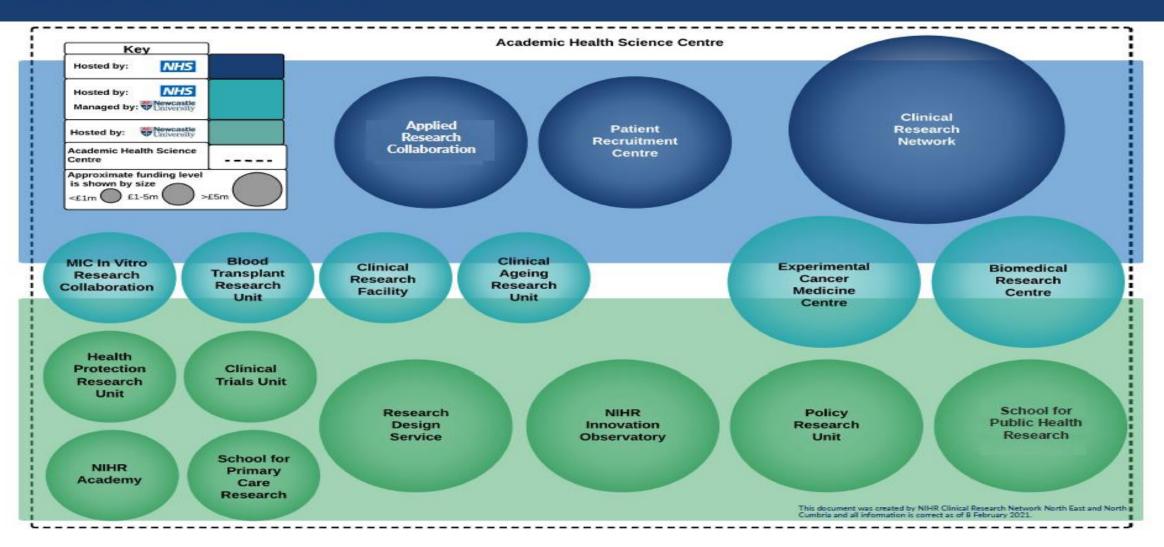








#### Infrastructure



# Growing VCSE involvement in health & care research in NENC

2018 – 2022 work led by Creating Connections

2018 National NIHR 'Reaching Out' programme

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July 2022 – new VCSE Health & Wellbeing Research Partnerships Coordinator role



2021 NIHR SPCR funded project:
Developing VCSE/Researcher partnerships
for impact and sustainability

2022 NIHR CED funded work: Developing a work programme for a new VCSE Research Partnerships role

- Funded by NIHR infrastructure partners
- Hosted by VONNE
- Supporting connections and sustainable, reciprocal partnerships
- Building capacity for partnerships









## Support available: VCSE Research Partnerships support, VONNE

VONNE are providing support to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and researchers looking to connect and work together for health and wellbeing research.

### Support available with

Connecting with a VCSE or research partners — we can share your research opportunities through VONNE's networks (with representation across the NENC region and communities of interest), and, where interests are aligned, make direct introductions to VCSE partners.



- **Building a VCSE research partnership** by providing advice and/or facilitation to support early partnership discussions based on establishing reciprocal, sustainable partnerships.
- Opportunities for skill sharing & training to support a better shared understanding of VCSE/research partners and approaches to working successfully in partnership for research.

Enquiry forms for research and VCSE partners to access support are available <a href="here">here</a>

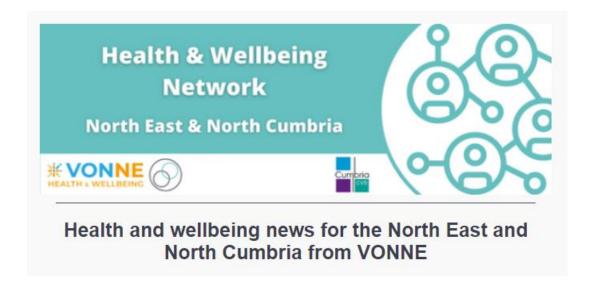








## Supporting connections



Sharing research opportunities through VONNE's networks







#### Why is research important?

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### Why do we need VCSE Research Partnerships?

In 2021, a project involving research and VCSE organisations from across the regain locked at how to develop mane sustainable VCSE research partnerships to support the involvement of diverse communities in research. One recommendation from this work was the creation of a new role of VCSE Hoalth & Wellberg Research Partnerships Coordinator to support a more coordinated approach

The role is funded by <u>National Institute</u> for <u>Health & Care</u>

<u>Research (NIHR)</u> infrastructure organisations and hosted by VON
<u>Greeta Brunskill</u> is a point of contact for researchers and VCSE
organisations, working to help ensure appropriate processes and
reimbursement are in place to support community involvement.

are bringing together the skills and experts or VESE and research partners. In the longer term, the aim is to see greater diversity of communities involved in research through long-facting, respincial partnerships and a growing number of projects driven by community views from the very beginning.



# VCSE Research Partnerships webpage – support enquiry forms & useful links









## **Building capacity**

Demystifying health and wellbeing research and evaluation: An introductory workshop

Tuesday 30th January 2024 10am – 12.30pm, online







What is the VCSE
sector?
A session for health,
research & other
partners
(coming soon)









# VCSE Research Partnerships support

VONNE host a <u>Health & Wellbeing network</u> which is open to anyone in the North East and North Cumbria region from VCSE organisations and the health and care sector with an interest in health and wellbeing.

Join the network to receive our Health & Wellbeing bulletin containing information about health and care system developments and news, funding and events, including research news and opportunities.









## NIHR Community Engagement Toolkit

10 guiding principles for researchers looking to involve communities and work with community organisations.

A great starting place for planning for working with communities for research, and to guide early discussions with potential research / VCSE partners

https://www.rdsresources.org.uk/ce-toolkit











# Putting Principles Into Practice:





## Community Engagement Toolkit project

- Creating Connections network
- Work to raise awareness and encourage adoption of the NIHR Community Engagement Toolkit
- NIHR Centre for Engagement & Dissemination grant to develop a resource kit to support putting principles into practice
- Early stages
- Co-production focus
- For more info about how you can get involved, please get in touch!





# Some key learning

- Working with organisations in the VCSE sector is one way to be more inclusive and involve more diverse communities in research
- Relationships with these organisations need to be built and maintained over time, with reciprocity and valuing everyone's time and input
- Genuine reciprocal partnerships are based on solid relationships that take investment on both sides to build and sustain
- Research systems and funding processes currently do not often create the conditions to nurture these kinds of partnerships









# Some key learning

- Lots of potential benefit of greater partnership working for research and the communities and the VCSE organisations that support them
  - For research project ideas, design, delivery, impact
  - For communities & individuals skills, learning, experience
  - For VCSE organisations evidencing their impact, access to evidence, influence on policy and practice, skills and learning.....
- Thinking creatively about how to work together is important
  - involving and valuing all kinds of expertise
  - learning together
  - sharing skills & knowledge
  - producing relevant, applied & inclusive outputs









# Some key learning

Sharing what research is and clearly describing the opportunity and why
it could be of interest - the 'so what' - is key when involving new
communities

- A growing request: "Can you help us involve more diverse / underrepresented groups in our research?"
  - What groups are under-served within your health or care topic?
  - Have you engaged these groups in your early stage PPIE?
  - Have you considered and given thought to the main barriers to including these groups in your research?









## Further resources & support

Resources to support patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in research – collated by the Creating Connections network

A newly developed collection of resources to support PPIE in our region, including links to locally developed and national resources to inform your PPIE planning and activity. <a href="https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/creatingconnections/">https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/creatingconnections/</a>

<u>Creating Connections</u> is a network of organisations, groups and individuals who all share an interest in patient and public involvement and engagement in health and care research.

The network enables collaboration on PPIE initiatives, sharing knowledge and best practice, develops models for more diverse and sustainable involvement, co-delivers training, offer peer support and more.

Members are largely based in the North East and North Cumbria region. You can learn more about the network and how to join here.









