



# Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR): Training and Mentoring

**A South East programme to develop community-based  
researchers**

**Guidance Document**



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## Programme background

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, inequalities in health have become magnified amongst some Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups disproportionately affected. Public Health England's report, [COVID-19: understanding the impact on BAME communities](#), demonstrates the widening of existing health inequalities and makes 8 recommendations. HEE SE, working alongside PHE SE are implementing a programme of work to support Recommendation 2: *Support community participatory research, in which researchers and community stakeholders engage as equal partners of the COVID-19.*

This programme will provide comprehensive training on Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) to engage, develop and support community researchers drawn from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups in the South East (SE). This programme provides an opportunity to develop community researchers in building capacity and capability, and to fill gaps and strengthen knowledge for certain previously excluded or not fully engaged communities.

This programme recognises the importance of implementing the recommendations in the PHE report and aligns with the NHS People Plan and the NHS Long Term Plan. It also supports the Turning the Tide South East response to the inequitable impact of the pandemic on health inequalities, which aims to address to health and employment, racial and wider inequalities.

This programme is a partnership of collaboration, mutuality, and active participation between HEE SE, PHE SE, the sponsor organisations and community organisations carrying out the research.

### Programme aims

- Train individuals from organisations drawn from BAME communities in CPAR to tackle health issues related to COVID-19
- Equip the BAME community researchers with the skills to later deliver CPAR to help in addressing wider inequalities.
- Share learning from CPAR across networks in the SE and beyond

## What is community participatory action research?

Community participatory action research is an approach to research where all stakeholders are equal partners, working together to make positive change within communities. This type of research is sometimes known as participatory action research (PAR), peer research, or community action research. All are based on similar principles of equal partnership, collaboration and addressing an issue from within the community.

By ‘**community**’ this indicates the research is grounded in the issues that affect community members. By ‘**participatory**’ this means engaging communities in the research process. By ‘**action**’ this indicates that the outcome of the research will lead to change critical to that community. Researchers commonly come from the communities affected and will play a key role in developing the local research agenda, the research questions, and the tools to collect, analyse and disseminate their findings. The research should lead to an action or actions.

See [Appendix 1](#): *Example of Community Participatory Action Research in the SE*

### How does the research lead to action?

Community participatory action research is often thought of as being a ‘cycle’ of:

**identifying issues - researching – planning – action – reflecting on the action.**

It can be started anywhere within the cycle. Importantly during this work, community researchers will complete one cycle and plan for future work. To deliver within the timeframe of this funding opportunity, it may be practical to start with a defined action.

The approach may be:

- Where there is an issue in a community and carrying out research would help to act and make a positive change. For example, to understand an issue in more depth before delivering an intervention.
- Where an action is planned or underway that would benefit from a research component to understand the extent of change.

See [Appendix 2](#) on research cycle

### Does this research work require ethical approval?

This work carried out by community researchers does not require formal ethical approval. However, the research should be carried out in accordance with a sound approach to research ethics and in line with the standards of accountability, ethics and reporting of participating organisations. An example of an appropriate ethical framework can be found here<sup>1</sup> and can be expanded in accordance with procedures and policies of the organisation (e.g. protection of children and vulnerable adults) as appropriate to the topic and community.

This research will be to implement actions at a community level, and we do not envisage that this will present a risk or harm to the public. Researchers will be trained on how to deal with issues that arise when working with the public. In addition, participating organisations should be

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<sup>1</sup> Action Research by, in and of Communities. A Practical Guide to Community-led Action Research [p.28](#)

able to draw on their own policies to support researchers and ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing during the project.

To comply with GDPR the community researchers will learn and be expected to implement the principles of consent, confidentiality, and safe storage of information. In addressing PHE recommendation 2, this programme aims to implement actions much needed during this pandemic and COVID recovery and it is not meant to be academic research.

## HEE Offer

HEE is funding the **training and mentorship** of up to **40 community researchers** across the SE.

To help accelerate this work, HEE will make available **funding for up to 34 hours of each researcher's time** (based on £11 per hour). This payment will be for hours implementing the research project and not for attending training. Payment will be made at a midpoint of the research project. An **induction session** will also be delivered **to identified leads** of projects.

### Programme timeline

- Applications must be received by **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 12 noon**
- Successful applicants will be informed **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021**
- The researchers will start the training programme April 2021 and will complete by **February 2022**.

### About the training and mentoring programme

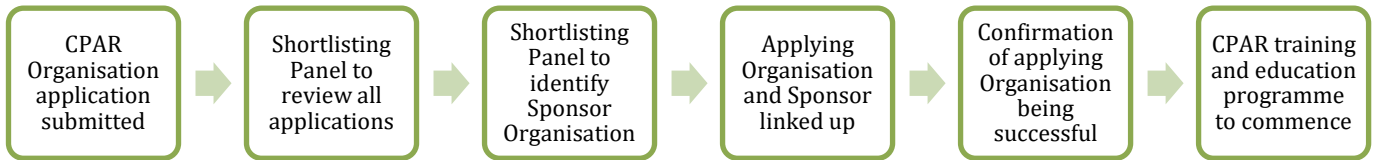
Through an expression of interest HEE has commissioned the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) to deliver this programme of training and mentoring. SCDC is a lead body for community development in Scotland and works in the north of England. SCDC has over 20 years' experience in working in this field and has adapted its delivery to online working since the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 45 hours' training and mentoring for each community researcher will be delivered for the duration of this programme.

The training and mentoring will focus on developing an **understanding of community health; understanding and application of community action research approaches;** and **building the capacity of participants or researchers** (primarily from the BAME community) to undertake community action research.

See [Appendix 3](#) for details on the training and mentoring.

## Application process

The chart below outlines the process



## Eligibility: about your organisation

### What kind of organisation can apply?

Voluntary community and social enterprises, NHS organisations or local authorities can apply for this funded opportunity. Your organisation must have close links with BAME communities.

### What is the role of the organisation applying for this work?

- Identify the researchers and ensure they are available for the duration of the programme.
- Coordination of the researchers' work with the strategic lead organisation to implement the actions/findings from the research.
- Identify training gaps and specific needs of your candidate researchers.
- Have access to Wi-Fi, laptops, or incentives for research participants if the project so requires.

### Linking your community research strategically

- HEE will work with you to locate a sponsor organisation if you do not already have one. A sponsor organisation is an organisation that has the power and influence to implement the research findings. This can be at the level of a Sustainable Transformational Partnership (STP), Integrated Care System (ICS) or local system level. Once your organisation is linked with the sponsor organisation, you will draw up an agreement/TOR on how you will work together. This is to ensure good governance of the research and action or actions.

### What is the role of a sponsor organisation?

The roles are:

- Ensure the research is linked to wider strategic priorities and COVID-19 recovery plans.
- Support and facilitate the actions identified from the research by taking ownership of the insights and translating them into action.

- Assign a professional to have oversight of the applicant organisation(s) under its umbrella (STP/LA/ICS).
- This person will be:
  - a main point of contact
  - engage in public health networks across the SE (e.g. SE Community Asset Based Approaches (CABA) network). HEE will help link you to these organisations.
  - attend an introduction webinar outlining the project and their role
  - join in quarterly calls with the HEE/PHE CPAR programme steering group

### Who are the researchers?

Researchers will be those who have links with the affected communities. They will ideally come from a Black, Asian or a minority ethnic community, or have direct first-hand experience in the issues affecting BAME people. Applicants will be required to have functional English language skills, similar to [Entry 2](#).<sup>2</sup> Some translation support can be offered in the training and if required should be stated in the application. Candidates are not required to have any community research experience, although it is an advantage to the project if they have some previous involvement.

While we understand that there are other communities experiencing health inequalities, this programme is prioritising the communities most affected by COVID-19 in line with PHE Recommendation 2. We envisage this work will produce learning for other affected groups, where the research or impact can act as exemplars to other work.

### Criteria for application

When completing the application form see application guidance at the end of the form.

- All sections of the application form must be completed
- Your project must address BAME communities and the impact of COVID-19
- Your project will *ideally* start but not necessarily at an 'action' in the research cycle
- Your project will have at least three candidates who will train as researchers

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<sup>2</sup> Functional skills Criteria for English

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/371150/11-10-07-functional-skills-criteria-for-english.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371150/11-10-07-functional-skills-criteria-for-english.pdf)

## Appendix 1: Example of Community Participatory Action Research

### Kent and Medway BAME Social Marketing Workstream

Addressing the disproportionate impact on BAME communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, Medway Voluntary Action and Medway Ethnic Minority Forum recruited community leaders and residents from BAME population groups and delivered training on basic research skills.

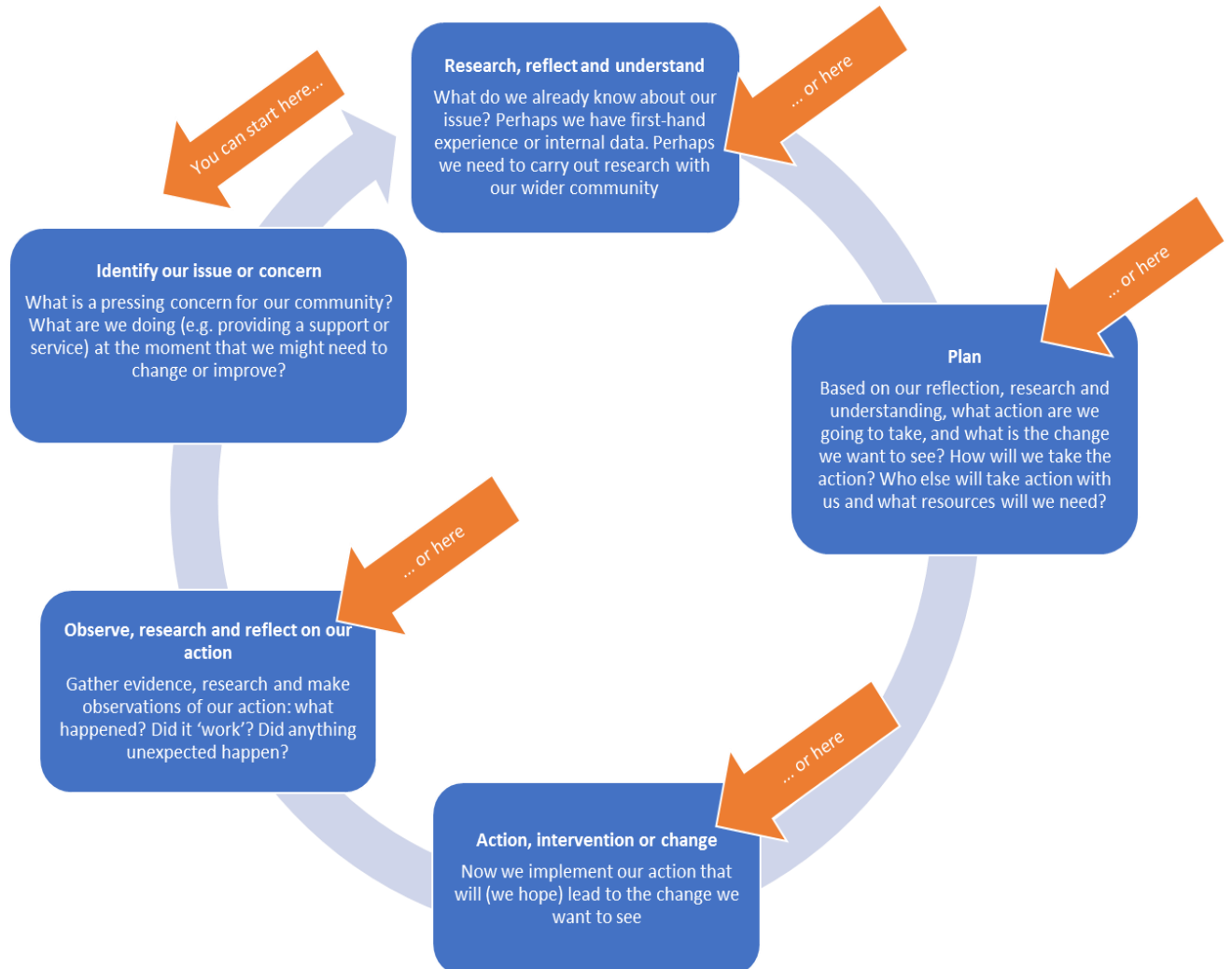
Those community researchers conducted structured interviews over the phone to people from Black African, Caribbean, Asian, Arab and Eastern European backgrounds. They asked about COVID symptom awareness, COVID safety messages, the barriers to testing, trusted sources of information, places most visited and sought their views on social marketing of COVID information. The researchers presented their interviewees draft communication materials for feedback.

While response revealed good awareness and adherence to safety advice, there was inconsistent messaging and people said they were unable to work from home. Actions from the feedback were to have communication in different languages that is straightforward, which are distributed to the local places frequented by the community. Following this, COVID community champions were recruited for further social marketing work.

## Appendix 2: Research cycle

This is an action-orientated research cycle. Your work can start at any place in this cycle.

*Produced by SCDC<sup>3</sup>*



<sup>3</sup> Knowledge is Power FAQs: Scottish Community Development Centre

## Appendix 3: Details of training and mentoring

Stage	Content	Date	Delivery	Training per researcher
Stage 1	Relevant materials, tools and resources will be circulated to participants in advance of the training	Mar 2021	Pre-training reading/information	1 day
Stage 2	<b>Building Knowledge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding community health and health inequalities – exploring a social model of health and community development approaches</li> <li>What is community research? - key elements of community research approaches – ethics, bias, action focus, methods, processes and analysis.</li> </ul>	Mar/Apr 2021	Core structured sessions (2 x 2 hours sessions)	4 hours
Stage 3	<b>Planning and Supporting the Research</b> Support to researchers to help plan, deliver and reflect on their research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1-2-1 support</b> - 2 structured online sessions for each participant. Allowing for prep and recording and other remote support</li> <li><b>Materials and tools development-</b> produce materials/tools and make available as toolkit materials for future community research opportunities.</li> <li><b>Group Learning/Co-inquiry sessions</b> –to learn from one another and explore particular topics in more detail.</li> </ul>	Apr-Dec 2021	Structured session  Structured session  Group learning/co-inquiry sessions/preparation	1 day  1 day  2 days
Stage 4	<b>Learning and Evaluation</b> Use of <a href="#">LEAP</a> framework to plan, evaluate and learn from the process. Recording to LEAP, preparation and delivery of final learning and evaluation session	Jan 2022		1 day