

NHS England REN Cohort 2 Partners - Joint Statement

Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) in partnership with Brighton and Sussex Health Research Partnership (HRP) has been awarded £100,000 of funding from NHS England to work in partnership with voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations across Sussex, with the aim to engage minoritised groups from areas of deprivation and to improve research participation.

The project will be led by Anna-Marie Bibby-Jones - Senior Research Fellow for Equality Diversity & Inclusion, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Jane Lodge - Associate Director of Public Involvement and Community Partnerships, Sussex Health and Care Partnership, and Virginia Govoni - Head of Health Research Partnership.

Building on the NHS Sussex Community Ambassador Network and community feedback, they plan to co-create and implement a Community Researcher Development Programme. People from our local minoritised ethnic communities and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer/Questioning and other identities (LGBTQ+) communities will be invited to receive Community Researcher training. They will reach out into various parts of Sussex to explore connections between communities and health and care research. Their findings will be crucial for guiding health and care providers and researchers on how we can do better at engaging marginalised groups.

The project leads will also launch a new pan-Sussex Diversity in Health and Care Research Engagement Network to bring together our local Grassroots organisations, larger VCSEs, the Integrated Care System (ICS) and health and care researchers. An independent impact evaluation will be conducted by Professor of Social Work and Social Policy, Kish Bhatti – Sinclair from University of Chichester.

Trust for Developing Communities will lead VCSE involvement in the project. Kaye Duerdoth - Deputy Chief Executive said: *"I am looking forward to this new collaboration which brings community research learning opportunities as well as greater understanding about engaging with communities effectively. This insight will lead to improved services for our communities."*

Prof Martin Llewelyn - Clinical Director of Research and Innovation at University Hospital Sussex said: *"The REN award comes at a very good time. Both the Trust and the HRP are setting their strategies for the next five years now. The award will help ensure there is really strong and diverse public input as these strategies take shape."*

Other VCSEs involved in the project are: Diversity Resource International (DRI), Sussex Interpreting Service (SIS), Brighton & Hove Switchboard, The Clare Project, Crawley Community Action, 3VA and Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester.