ARC FEST2 27ᵗʰ February - notes from EPHC Management Meeting/Workshop

Attendees

35 people attended the meeting, this included 12 members from universities across the NWC, 12 from member organisations including local authorities and NHS organisations and 10 public advisors.

1. Catherine Walshe (CW) presented an introduction to the theme and overarching principles these included:
    1. Place-based (systems) approach
    2. Collaborations between the public, other local stakeholders and researchers
    3. Integrated health and care
    4. Upstream (social determinants) and health equity focus

2. Fiona Ward and Emma Halliday described the work of the EPHC theme to date and key findings from the focus groups carried out in Dec 2019 and Jan 2020. Groups had been conducted on 3 topics Air pollution, social prescribing and social isolation. 77 members of the public participated in the groups. Summaries of the group discussions were available and they can also be found on the ARC website at https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/resources/publications/

3. For the remainder of the meeting participants took part in facilitated discussions on the three priority topics of Air Quality, Social Prescribing and Social Isolation. Each group explored 3 questions.

    Topic1: Air Quality

    How can communities participate in decision-making and action to reduce the health harms of air pollution?
    a) To what extent is this a relevant topic for your work/organisation or your neighbourhood?
    b) Our group conversation findings indicate a lack of community participation:
    a. Are you aware of opportunities (e.g. structures within organisations, grassroots activities) for community participation on this topic?
    b. What might be the challenges in actively involving communities within decision-making processes and the delivery of actions to tackle air pollution?

    - Feedback highlighted importance of air pollution to their areas and organisational priorities and there was an agreement that there is a lack of community involvement in developing actions/plans and community voices are often not heard
    - Discussions also emphasised approaches need to have more of focus on behaviour change and raising awareness of the issues – felt issues around AP are not as well understood.
    - It was suggested that there is a potential to include wider parts of the community/system (employers and employees, residents groups, Healthwatch)

    Topic 2. Social Prescribing

    Community and voluntary organisation are part of the social prescribing landscape. This research idea focuses on the nature and extent of their involvement in shaping, planning and delivering social prescribing services and activities

a. To what extent are these relevant research ideas for your work/organisation or your neighbourhood? Why do you say this?

b. Our group conversation findings show there is a concern about the availability and accessibility of services and activities to refer people to

   a. Would you agree with this?

   b. Do you think this varies from place to place? If so, why?

- Feedback highlighted the need for better understanding of what is meant by Social Prescribing and raising awareness of what is available. Discussions also reinforced the potential impacts on voluntary and third sector organisations and concerns around capacity of organisation to meet need.
- There was recognition that provision varies from place to place – some areas will have more opportunities than others and GP practice varies - possibility to explore what is it about those places that enable more activity to be available, is it funding, local action, strategic priorities, informal infrastructures
- Feedback also emphasised there was little in terms of community involvement taking place in the planning and delivery of Social Prescribing. Community knowledge is not being utilised

Topic 3: Social isolation

How connectivity can be promoted in particular housing settings or amongst priority population groups in order to reduce social isolation

a. To what extent is this a relevant topic for your work/organisation or your neighbourhood? Why do you say this?

b. How would you think about place in relation to social isolation?

c. Do you think there should be a focus on social isolation in e.g. housing settings or amongst specific groups?

- Feedback highlighted the importance of social isolation and how it impacts different groups. Discussions also touched on issues in reaching and identifying those people that are isolated.
- Young people and carers and men were identified as groups that are disproportionally affected by isolation as well as those living in rural communities
- Discussions also emphasised the focus should not necessarily be on groups but meaningful spaces or creating 'spaces with meaning'
- Feedback also identified the importance of the role of community hubs and spaces including, green spaces in connecting people and the fact there been a loss of spaces where people have connected in the past has impacts for social isolation

4. **Next steps**

   CW thanked participants and informed delegates that the information collected today would be used to refine the research ideas and would be discussed at the next EPHC management meeting. Next steps also include confirming member participation and demonstrator sites