

The role of the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector within an integrated health and care system - a developmental research project

Who is conducting this research?

This research is being undertaken by researchers at Lancaster University who work with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration for the North West Coast (ARC-NWC) in the Equitable Place Based Health and Care Theme (EPHC).

Introduction and background

The Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) has had a significant role within local systems in responding to the immediate and longer-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this research we are exploring the response of the VCFSE sector in the context of the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS); an ICS that is interesting because of its recent efforts to develop partnership working with the VCFSE sector. In addition to providing insight into the COVID-19 response, this research will look more broadly at opportunities for partnership working to support health improvement; drawing upon practices, experiences, and expertise from within the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS and across its regional footprint. It is anticipated that findings from this work will inform funding bids for a more substantial and comparative piece of research that will consider the approach to VCFSE engagement in different ICSs.

Objectives

1. To produce learning about VCFSE roles as part of a system response to COVID-19 within the North West Coast region, understanding the range of roles the sector has had.
2. To undertake exploratory work to support future economic analysis of the sector's contribution.
3. To scope the sector's longer-term potential role within local integrated health and care systems, including the sector's contribution to addressing inequalities in health.
4. To undertake planning and feasibility work to shape future research.

Methodology

Data-collection will take two forms:

- 1) Strategic level semi-structured interviews x 15
 - a. Interviews with senior leaders of VCFSE organisations x 10
 - b. Interviews with senior leaders from statutory partners (NHS and local authorities) who are involved in developing/leading partnership working with the VCFSE sector x 5
- 2) Case study semi-structured interviews x 3-5
 - a. Interviews with leaders of VCFSE organisations involved in the COVID-19 response 'on the ground'

Dissemination/outputs

- 1) Findings report shared with ARC-NWC network Steering Board and the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS Board and VCFSE Alliance (board leading VCFSE engagement with the ICS in Lancashire and South Cumbria.
- 2) Findings summaries for ARC-NWC newsletter and website as well as for VCFSE partners.
- 3) Academic dissemination – journal articles and conference presentations.
- 4) Funding application for further research.

Contacts

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