



Life Sciences: What is the value of working with people and communities?



We know that truly understanding people's needs can be challenging for Life Sciences partners...we have the expertise to support you!

Health Innovation Network Kent, Surrey, Sussex is a trusted organisation that listens to and works with people experiencing health inequalities through the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.

We champion the active involvement of the public, patients, carers and staff in shaping research and innovation.

As a dedicated team of **involvement specialists**, we bring expertise in embedding **community insights** and **lived experience** at every stage of the research and innovation journey. Our knowledge of the statutory duties in Working with People and Communities, enables partners to fulfil their **legal**, **social** and **moral** obligations for genuine community involvement.

Through strong partnerships across Kent, Surrey and Sussex we support our partners to **co-produce inclusive, meaningful** and **community-led** research and innovation that benefits all.



Involvement with underrepresented communities



NHS Kent and Medway Digital and Data Involvement Group

“Many people commended your beautiful and friendly spirit, thanks so much for the support to keep - our people felt included and empowered” – Community Group Member

“I found it very encouraging how our group moved in the same direction whilst debating a complex topics. It's almost fluid how the ideas and concepts evolve. I've been in groups in other environments and it's got confrontational at times – but this was not the case” – Public Member



Life Sciences

By listening to insights from people and communities, we help our Life Science partners to:

- Understand **people's needs** to ensure treatments and interventions are effective, targeted, usable and accepted.
- Fulfil organisational pledges and commitments on reducing **health inequalities**.
- Embed insights from people with **lived experience**, and **from groups who are underrepresented** or experience **health inequalities**

How this approach can help:

- At the research and development stage, to understand true **unmet need**.
- At Evidence Generation stage, to bring people's relevant lived experience into **health and technology appraisals**.
- At Implementation, to understand the **broad impact of improved interventions** to people and communities.

Case study: Medicines Information

Challenge: 30-50% of patients do not take medicines according to prescription and product information instructions. Despite this, the product information for human medicines has not changed substantially for decades.

What we did:

- Partnered with **Pfizer**, the **UK National Innovation Centre for Ageing**, and **VOICE** to gather community insights on medicines information.
- Co-developed a **survey with nearly 3,000 responses**.
- Ran **focus groups and interviews** to capture a **diverse range of voices**.
- Prioritised input from people **experiencing health inequalities**.
- Worked with **trusted VCSE partners** to create **safe spaces** for open, honest sharing of lived experiences.

Impact:

- **Unmet need:** Identified unmet need in the accessibility and personalisation of medicines paper product information leaflet, which results in patients using unregulated online sources, in turn leading to misuse and safety risks.
- **Lived experience:** Community insights uncovered key barriers to inform product design: low health and digital literacy, lack of carer support and overreliance on healthcare professionals to proactively share updates.
- **Improved interventions:** Shaped the design of a tailored electronic medicines product information pilot, designed for easy access in real-world settings that will address unmet need, and close the gap in patient safety and support.

Kent Surrey Sussex
Academic Health Science
Network

Unity
Insights

Pfizer

National Innovation
Centre Ageing | Voice





Contact us

Want to involve people and communities in research and innovation?

Contact the team today!

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