

Research Engagement Network (REN) Project

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Community Grants Expression of Interest



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The Research Engagement Network (REN) Project

The **Research Engagement Network (REN)** in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is part of a national programme designed to **strengthen connections between local communities, researchers and health and care partners.**

Over the past two years, our local REN has been working to:

- Build trusted relationships with voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations.
- Support researchers to involve diverse and underserved communities in meaningful ways.
- Create opportunities for local people to learn about, shape, and take part in health and care research.

This next phase of the REN is focused on **deepening those relationships and widening awareness** across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. By working closely with community organisations, we aim to ensure that research reflects the **lived experiences, needs, and strengths** of our diverse local population.

We are seeking expressions of interest to deliver targeted health and wellbeing engagement activities and events to local communities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire which additionally raise awareness of health and care research.

We are offering grants of up to £2,500 per organisation.

We want to fund activities that not only provide immediate engagement opportunities but will also **have a lasting impact** — whether that's stronger relationships between local communities and researchers, increased community understanding and confidence in relation to research, or a simple resource that researchers and communities can continue to use in the future.

Activities do not need to be large or complicated — the emphasis is on building trust and creating ongoing understanding between communities and researchers.

We would like organisations to:

- Work with the REN team to deliver health and wellbeing community engagement activities that include raising awareness of health and care research.
- Bring their own deep knowledge and expertise of the communities they serve, ensuring activities are meaningful and relevant.

- Use this expertise to ensure that the needs, experiences, and strengths of their communities are central to the design and delivery of activities.
- Working with the REN team to create initiatives that support communities to feel more confident in engaging with research, while helping researchers better understand the unique needs and strengths of local groups.
- Share insights and feedback from these activities with the REN team to inform and shape future engagement.

Examples of Activities

Activities could include (but are not limited to):

- Running a local community health and wellbeing event, workshop, or open day to talk about wellbeing and health and care research.
- Creating a resource (e.g. leaflet, short video, or guide) that helps researchers understand how best to engage with your community.
- Hosting a stall at a community festival or gathering to share information about research opportunities.
- Facilitating a small focus group or discussion with community members about their experiences, concerns, or priorities around health and care that can be shared with researchers.
- Using creative approaches (arts, storytelling, film, digital media) that communities can reuse or share beyond the funded project.

We are especially interested in activities that reach **underserved or underrepresented communities**, ensuring their voices and experiences are carried forward into future research.

Funding available

Up to £2,500 per organisation.

Timescales and Training

You will need to be available to attend a face-to-face REN training session on the 22nd January 2026. Your planned activity will need to be undertaken between January and March 2026. All activities should be completed by the 31st March 2026.

Feedback

Following your planned activity, you will be required to provide feedback and share your key learnings, outcomes and reflections at a celebration event hosted by the REN team in April 2026.

Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. **Relevance** – Does the activity clearly raise awareness of health and care research and/or support inclusive engagement in research?
2. **Inclusivity** – Does it reach communities who are seldom heard in research?
3. **Feasibility** – Is it realistic and achievable within the budget (up to £2,500)?
4. **Legacy/Impact** – Will the activity have a longer-term impact? (e.g. relationships, confidence, insights, or a resource for researchers/communities) that continues after the funding ends?
5. **Value for money** – Does the proposal make good use of the funding available?

How to express an interest

To be considered, VCSE organisations should be working with communities based in Nottingham and/or Nottinghamshire.

You will also need to have relevant safeguarding processes and procedures in place as well as the necessary public liability insurance and employment insurance to enable you to conduct your proposed activity/event.

If you would like further information or in case of any queries, please email ncvs@nottinghamcvs.co.uk

To submit an expression of interest please do so via MS Forms [here](#).

Deadline for submissions; 15th December 2025 at midday.