



Dear Member,

We hope your 2026 has got off to a positive start, and that the prospect of slightly brighter, longer days has helped avoid January feeling too neverending!

Here at BVSC, we've been busy preparing for our upcoming **Power of Us conference** - which we hope you've already heard lots about. The conference takes place **Thursday 23rd April at Birmingham City Football Club** and without further ado, here is the ...

 [Eventbrite link to book your place!](#) 

We are so excited to see you all there.

As a reminder, the **Power of Us conference 2026** marks the second year of us bringing together our Birch Network members, community organisations, academics and *anyone* interested in the power of engagement in research. Hear all about last year's event [here](#), and rest assured that this year is shaping up to be just as dynamic. We're working with our Research Engagement Network (REN) partners, and community researchers, to devise an agenda with:

- ★ Powerful key note speakers
- ★ Engaged community panels
- ★ Workshop sessions that will enable meaningful discussion

This year we gave the conference the theme: *In Partnership: Creating Spaces for Trust, Understanding, and Shared Impact*, something we know you will all agree is at the heart of collaborative practice. We hope you will join us to learn and share on this theme.

In the meantime, please keep attending our network meetings, sharing this newsletter, and engaging with our CHERP website so that we can build more opportunities in research.

★ Call for abstracts! ★
[Click here or read below.](#)

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS! POWER OF US 2026



As mentioned above, the Birmingham and Solihull Research Engagement Network (REN) partnership will be hosting our second annual 'Power of Us' research conference, supported by the Regional Research Delivery Network (RRDN). **This event will bring together approximately 150 people who are involved or interested in how trust effects community-driven participatory research.**

The day will include a number of plenary sessions and interactive workshops centred on how trust impacts research, the importance of infrastructures on building trust in research, and the effects that improving trust can have on research and it's outputs. We are also very open to, and interested in, your ideas for workshops, so please let us know in the form.

If you are interested in facilitating more than one workshop, please complete more than one expression of interest. Please complete this form by **Monday 16th February** at 12:00pm (noon). A member of the team will contact you to the email address provided on the form to acknowledge receipt of the application and will then let you know by the end of the following week if you are successful.

FILL THE FORM IN NOW

[Expression of Interest Form](#)

SAVE THE DATE



**23rd April 2026
9am-4.30pm**



**Birmingham City Football Club,
St Andrews, B9 4RL**

Project Updates from Birch Members

Check the CHERP community Hub!

There are lots of new updates on our [community hub](#), just waiting for you to check them out... click on the 'New' or 'Latest' tab to see what's been shared since you last logged in!

The screenshot shows the CHERP community hub interface. At the top left is the CHERP logo, a search bar, and a menu icon. The left sidebar contains navigation options: 'Back to CHERP', 'Topics', 'My posts', 'My messages', 'Review', 'Admin', 'Invite', and 'More'. Below these are 'CATEGORIES' including 'Research', 'Toolkits, Guidance and Te...', 'Training', 'Media', 'Community Researcher ...', and 'Current & Upcoming Res...'. The main content area has tabs for 'categories', 'tags', 'Categories', 'Latest' (selected), and 'Hot'. Below the tabs is a 'Topic' filter. The main content area displays a list of posts: 'Welcome to CHERP!' with a 'Cherp Tutorials' tag, 'Homecare Workers as Proxy Healthcare Professionals' with a 'Current & Upcoming Research' tag, 'Research into Youth Violence with West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership' with 'Current & Upcoming Research' and 'community-research, co-production, young-people' tags, 'Smoking Cessation Research' with 'Current & Upcoming Research' and 'community-research, survey, interviews' tags, and 'Easy Read Training in Birmingham City Centre - 21st April 2026' with a 'Training' tag.

The CHERP hub



The CHERP hub is a shared space for community, connection and research into health, social care and wellbeing. As a member of the BIRCH network you should have received an invite link which allows you to create a log in so you can begin sharing your work on the platform. If you haven't received a log in link, need help, or have feedback please contact researchadmin@bvsc.org

[Visit the hub to connect and share your work.](#)

Research Involvement Opportunities

Please feel free to share the following opportunities within your networks, or to contact the named researchers directly for more information.

Responses to Food Insecurity in School & Educational Environments

RISE is a PhD research project exploring how UK-based schools support children and families experiencing food insecurity. The project is delivered in two phases. Phase 1 involves a 30-minute online survey about your school's current food approaches and support strategies completed by senior school staff. Phase 2 offers optional follow-up interviews.

The research aims to understand what food support is in place, how need is identified, and what helps or challenges schools in providing this support. Schools may choose to enter a prize draw to win £300 for their school as a thank you for taking part.

Questions? Contact Ellie Ansell at ema440@student.bham.ac.uk.

Survey link - <https://redcap.link/RISEPROJECT>

Involvement Hub, please email the PPI team at pqi@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Can you support us in promoting our current smoking research. Please share the flyer below with your networks, display in community spaces and complete the survey if you are a smoker who lives in Birmingham. For more details see the flyer below.

Do you use tobacco? Are you over 16 years old? Do you live in Birmingham?

If so, please take part in our survey

SCAN ME!



- Birmingham City Council's Public Health team seeks to understand the reasons behind higher than usual tobacco use in five specific wards*: Bartley Green, Castle Vale, King's Norton South, Garretts Green, and Oscott.

*You don't need to live in one of those 5 wards to complete the survey

The project is funded by Birmingham City Council Public Health division and organised by BVSC Research.

We're asking the community about youth violence and safety.

We will be working across the West Midlands and we want to hear from you and your networks.

Contact: communityresearch@bvsc.org
for more info



West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership is working in partnership with BVSC to find out more about youth violence, safety and social harm, and would like community members to undertake research across the region. **Would you or anyone you know be interested in being interviewed? Interviewees get a £10 voucher, and interviews are 1 hr max.**

We're looking specifically for:

- Residents of the West Midlands (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Solihull)
- People aged 16-25
- Adults with professional/personal experience of youth violence related issues

Interest in being interviewed - VRP
Community Research Project 2026



PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Exploring how LGBTQIA+, autistic people understand romantic relationships

This is an online qualitative survey at Birmingham City University which is part of a PhD project on autism and romantic relationships

If you:

Are aged 18+

Identify as LGBTQIA+

Have an autism diagnosis

I want to hear from you about your understanding of romantic/intimate relationships!

Scan the QR code to take part



Powered By QuestionPro

The study consists of:

- **An open-response survey which asks about your understanding of romantic and intimate relationships.**
- **No previous relationship experience is necessary to take part.**
- **You should be willing to discuss your autistic and LGBTQIA+ identities and understanding of romance/intimacy**

Example topics covered in the survey:
Identity
Communication
What a relationship means to you

Supervised by: Dr Josephine Cornell, Dr Keeley Abbott and Dr Sam Parker

PhD researcher:
Joseph Edge

Any questions? Send me an email!
joseph.edge@mail.bcu.ac.uk



Can you help?



My name is Steph Clarke, and I am a physiotherapist at Birmingham Children's Hospital. I specialise in helping children with heart conditions.

Unfortunately, nearly half of these children come from minority ethnic backgrounds. I want to ensure that the research project I am developing is inclusive and accessible to the diverse population it aims to serve.



What?

I am looking for individuals willing to share their unique experiences and perspectives to help support the design of a research project

Who?

Any parent who has accessed healthcare for their child via the hospital or community services or parents whose child has a heart condition

Why?

Public involvement in research means involving the public as partners through each stage of the research journey. Your involvement will help make our research more relevant, accessible and impactful for the communities we serve

What will I be asked to do?

There are several ways you can share your views

- Individual chat via ZOOM
- Answering questions via a short online survey

What do I do to take part?

Please contact us via the email below if you feel you can help



**For more information contact:
sxc402@student.bham.ac.uk**

Positive Pathways Research Study



Positive Pathways is a research project which aims to help educate, motivate and inspire young people to change their negative behaviours, get back on track and move towards a safer future.

The research poses the question- does adventure learning and mentoring support young people to develop prosocial and positive behaviour, and in turn reduce the likelihood of being involved in the youth justice system.

Funded by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), Positive Pathways offers selected applicants a unique residential experience and up to seven months personalised support to keep them on track and move towards a safer future.

To be eligible for Positive Pathways a young person must:

- Be 15-17 years old.
- Live in the East or West Midlands.
- Be willing to take part in a research study which includes undertaking a survey at the start and end of the programme.

Provide consent to take part (as well as a guardian, carer or parent consenting) and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Vulnerable or At Risk
- Not Engaged in Education
- SEND, EHCP or Health Concern
- Care experienced (Looked after Child, LAC)
- Presenting needs
- Disadvantaged
- Criminal Record
- Arrested/ convicted
- Lack of engagement



ingeus



Positive Pathways Research Study



If eligible, and consent is received, each young person will receive either:

Control Group	or	Intervention Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ An activity delivered by the organisation that referred the young person to the research through a £50 enrichment payment from Positive Pathways for participation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ A four night, five day residential experience to learn work and life skills.→ A dedicated Mentor to provide information, advice and guidance.→ A celebration event following programme completion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ A £20 Love2shop voucher for completing a survey at the beginning and end of the evaluation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ A £20 Love2shop voucher for completing a survey at the beginning and end of the evaluation.

Refer a young person to Positive Pathways today!

Complete a referral form at www.ingeus.co.uk/positive-pathways or by scanning the QR code below.

Please note that making a referral does not guarantee a young person's place on the programme.

For more information about Positive Pathways, for bulk referral information or to discuss partnership opportunities, email: positivepathways@ingeus.co.uk



ingeus





Expression of Interest - Online Focus Group Discussion

- This form allows you to express interest in joining a focus group. We are gathering participants who can share experiences and views to inform the redesign of Birmingham City Council demographic questionnaires. Further information can be found here: <https://www.acesoghc.com/blachir>
 - Your personal data (name and email) will be processed for the purpose of contacting you about taking part in a focus group.
 - Any demographic information you provide will be used only for participant selection.
 - The legal basis for processing your data is consent.
 - Your data will be stored securely, kept confidential and will not be shared outside the project team.
 - You may withdraw your consent at any time by contacting us and your data will be deleted.
 - If selected to take part, you will receive Participant Information, Consent Form before the focus group and a £25 voucher following the session.
- By completing this form, you agree to be contacted by one of our team

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

1. Do you consent? *

- I consent to my data being processed as described above.
- I do not consent to my data being processed as described above.

2. What is your full name - First name / Last name? *

Enter your answer

Upcoming Events

BIRMINGHAM SEND CO-PRODUCTION TRAINING 2026



FREE in-person SEND co-production training sessions at a variety of venues throughout 2026.

- Examine the definition of co-production as detailed in the [SEND Co-production Framework & Charter](#)
- Hear perspectives on co-production – from young people and parent carers
- Understand the benefits – how co-production can make a difference in your work and networks
- Learn about the [SEND Co-production Award Scheme](#) – a tool to show co-productions impact in your setting

BOOK YOUR PLACE

WHO CAN ATTEND?

All training sessions are **FREE** and open to all staff and volunteers working in SEND education, health, social care, and the voluntary sector services in Birmingham. Young people and parents carers are also welcome to attend this training.

Introduction to easy read



This co-delivered training will equip you with the basic principles and skills to produce easy read letters, information and instructions.

Date: Tuesday 21st April 2026

Venue: BVSC Latham House, 33-34 Paradise St, Birmingham B1 2AJ

Times: 10.30am to 3.45pm.



Please arrive 10.15am, tea and coffee provided.

Bring a packed lunch
(there are lunch shops nearby on New Street)

Enquiries, booking and programme available from: mail@building-bridges-training.org



Cost - £130 per person. £70 for students

All attendees will receive a copy of the Building Bridges guide to producing easy read information to take home.

Travel: please come on public transport.
The metro stops outside and the venue is a short walk from Snow Hill and New Street Railway Stations.



Birmingham VCFSE Community Cohesion Summit – Monday 23 February

BVSC and BRIG are bringing together Birmingham's Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector to develop a collective approach to tackling the community cohesion challenges facing our city. This conference welcomes VCFSE organisations representing marginalised communities. This includes geographic and dispersed communities, communities of interest and communities of identity.

We especially welcome representation from VCFSE organisations where community tensions have been high, and challenges have emerged around immigration, resources and community cohesion.

Please also note that this event is specifically for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector representatives to attend, rather than individual citizens i.e.

- Individuals who work in or volunteer with constituted VCFSE organisations based in Birmingham City.
- We extend a warm welcome to people with lived experience from within these organisations.

Further details of the event, including on how to register, are here:
<https://www.bvsc.org/Event/birmingham-vcfse-community-cohesion-summit>