

## Dear Member,

In case you missed it, we recently hosted our 'Power of Us' conference alongside our partners: Flourish CIC, Catalyst 4 Change, Community Connexions, the local Integrated Care Board and our colleagues from the NIHR.

The day was jam-packed with opportunities to network, meet and hear from community researchers, learn about community engagement from the voluntary sector and academics, and we were so delighted to see so many of you on the day.



A highlight for us personally, was seeing our community researchers, Kumari Kher and Jean Claude Kabuiku, co-host the day spectacularly. They welcomed a room full of researchers, senior leaders, academics, community organisations and local residents to the space with energy, warmth and authenticity. We are so grateful to them!

Another key moment was the opportunity for everyone in the space (130 people!) to move around and interact with our community researchers' posters. These researchers were brand new and were trained as part of our funding from the NIHR Regional Development Network. **You can see all of the posters on CHERP here!**



**You can read our Director Research's reflections here.**

Thanks to everyone who came along on the day, shared their ideas, listened, engaged and helped us dig into what it really means to build trusted relationships between research and communities. Now to start planning next year's conference...!

Best wishes, Keshena, CHERP Manager at BVSC,  
Email me at: [keshenab@bvsc.org](mailto:keshenab@bvsc.org)

# Shout-outs

We shared some new short films at our Power of Us conference, and we'd love you to take a look, and share with anyone you think would like to understand what community research is, and how it makes a difference.



Check the films  
out here!

We want to hear from you...



★ Let us know if you'd like to present at the next quarterly meeting! We'd love to hear from you and your research ideas ★



Share updates with:  
[researchadmin@bvsc.org](mailto:researchadmin@bvsc.org) and  
we will add your research studies, updates or events into this monthly newsletter.

# Engage with the Birch Network!

We want to hear from you in this newsletter and at our quarterly meetings...



Share updates with:  
[researchadmin@bvsc.org](mailto:researchadmin@bvsc.org) and we will add your research studies, updates or events into this monthly newsletter.

★ Let us know if you'd like to present at the next quarterly meeting! We'd love to hear from you and your research ideas ★



# 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 and a search bar. Below the logo is a navigation menu with options: Back to CHERP, Topics, My posts, My messages, Review, Admin, Invite, and More. The main content area is titled 'Topic' and features a 'Latest' tab. The content includes a welcome message, a tutorial link, and several research and training posts with category tags and user avatars.

- Categories: Latest, Hot
- Topic: Welcome to CHERP! (Cherp Tutorials)
- Homecare Workers as Proxy Healthcare Professionals (Current & Upcoming Research)
- Research into Youth Violence with West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (Current & Upcoming Research, community-research, co-production, young-people)
- Smoking Cessation Research (Current & Upcoming Research, community-research, survey, interviews)
- Easy Read Training in Birmingham City Centre - 21st April 2026 (Training)

## 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](mailto:researchadmin@bvsc.org)

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

# Research Involvement Opportunities

## Birmingham City Council demographic questionnaire

The purpose of this testing is to understand how clear, accessible and easy the questionnaire is to complete before it is implemented more widely. During the session, participants will complete questionnaires online, while a researcher observes the process. The researcher will act as a neutral observer; they will not explain or clarify questions, but will record completion time, points of confusion, requests for explanation and visible reactions.

Inclusion Criteria To take part, participants must:

Be aged 18 or over

Be able to read and write English independently at a conversational level (without supervision or support)

Have access to a digital device (desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone) and be able to use it independently

Not have previously been involved in the redesign or development of the questionnaire (to avoid prior exposure influencing the results)

If selected to take part, they will receive Participant Information, Consent Form before the session and a £25 voucher following the session.

Fill in the form:

[Usability Testing Recruitment](#)

# Opportunity for professionals who support care-experienced young people

The University of Birmingham is running a study on how care-experienced young people aged 13–25 seek mental health support in England (foster care, kinship care and residential care). This includes support from VCSE organisations as well as formal services. The study was designed together with care-experienced young people to ensure it reflects their views. We're asking VCSE organisations and other professionals to share this opportunity with the care-experienced young people they support: they can take part in a short anonymous survey (prize draw) or a one-hour online interview for those aged 16–25 (£25 e-voucher). More information and links to take part: <https://linktr.ee/COLLAGEresearchstudy>.

HAVE YOU STAYED IN A UK CITY HOTEL RECENTLY?

Help shape the future of inclusive hospitality!

I am Adelaide Moreno, a final-year student at the University of Greenwich. I am looking for participants for my dissertation research titled:

"Invisible Journeys: Exploring the Intersection of Race and Wheelchair Accessibility in UK Hotel Experiences."

I am looking to speak with you if you are:

- Black or Black British.
- A manual or power wheelchair user.
- Have stayed in a 3 or 4-star UK city hotel in the last 2 years.

What is involved?

A relaxed, 15 - 30-minute conversation (via Zoom/Teams or in-person in London or Birmingham) about your experiences—the good, the bad, and the overlooked.

Why participate?

Your voice will help highlight the specific barriers Black disabled travellers face and provide hotels with practical recommendations for real change.

Interested? Please contact me directly via email at:

[am1235c@gre.ac.uk](mailto:am1235c@gre.ac.uk)

All data is fully anonymised and strictly confidential. This study has been reviewed by the University of Greenwich Ethics Committee.

# Upcoming Events

## Call for papers!

Evidence Into Action – Unlocking the Power of Civil Society Research  
Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference 2026

Main Conference: 9–10 September 2026

Location: Watershed Conference Centre, Bristol, UK

The 2026 Voluntary Sector & Volunteering Research (VSVR) Conference will bring together people from across the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, alongside researchers, policymakers and funders, to explore how research can drive real-world change.

This year's theme – “Evidence into Action” – focuses on how research can strengthen organisations, inform decision-making, and create social change.

Expect an engaging programme of discussions, practical workshops and networking opportunities, including a dedicated New Researchers Day on 8 September.

Papers engaging with the conference theme may explore questions such as:

How research knowledge is co-produced with practitioners, volunteers, service users, communities, and policymakers

How power, voice, and inclusion are negotiated in participatory research

How research influence and impact are understood, demonstrated, and valued

Why translating evidence into policy or practice can be challenging, and what helps

You can submit your abstract here (deadline 18th May):

<https://www.vssn.org.uk/vssn-conference-abstract-submissions-2026/>

Want to find out more?

Booking will open shortly. Visit [www.vssn.org.uk](http://www.vssn.org.uk) or email [vsvrconference@vssn.org.uk](mailto:vsvrconference@vssn.org.uk) for further information





## Birmingham Voices for Wellbeing: Speak • Share • Shape



Through a workshop, webinar, an online survey or community drop-ins - share what wellbeing in your community means to you






We welcome people from all Birmingham communities, including young people, older adults, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, and people with lived experience of mental health challenges.

**NIHR** | Midlands Patient Safety  
Research Collaboration

## Are You Passionate About Supporting Women's Birth Choices?



Doulas, birth workers, and maternity advocates are invited to take part in a **research workshop exploring maternity decision-making and service redesign.**

 University of Birmingham  
 Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026 or Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026  
 Scan the QR code (or visit <https://bit.ly/4soPQtr>) to learn more and express an interest in taking part.  
We'll be back in touch to confirm if you have been selected.

