



## ARC East of England

# Addressing the right to healthcare for Travelling Communities

*This project will identify solutions for improving healthcare access through the meaningful involvement of community groups.*

Currently, the right to access healthcare in the UK for Gypsy, Roma, Showmen, and other Traveller communities is not being met. These communities live on average 10 years less than the general population, and they continue to experience deep and persistent exclusion, discouraging and preventing access to healthcare.

There are a series of interacting barriers to access, including a lack of trust, which

create a wide range of health inequalities as well as other issues of social and material disadvantage. Solutions to these barriers must be identified to ensure their right to access healthcare is met.

### **What was the aim of the project?**

This project implements principles of involvement to develop methods for including the most persistently marginalised groups in healthcare research and provision.

## What did we do?

We spent 18 months working with community groups to develop collaborative ways of working that are culturally competent. We identified core issues around accessing healthcare and developed the Research for Patient Benefit bid.

## How did we involve people?

This project involved community members and health practitioners throughout. We involved groups in research development to co-produce priorities, and we also provided involvement payments for all work to co-produce this project.

We collaborated with the community on all aspects of project development to foster trusting working relationships with a range of stakeholders and facilitate project implementation.

## What is the impact so far?

We have already learned huge amounts about the best ways of working with marginalised groups to ensure direct and meaningful involvement is maintained across project design and delivery. For example, the importance of a handshake to

symbolise agreement and consent to participate and the broad need to develop our own levels of cultural competency in meeting the expectations of these groups.

## What next?

We will identify and understand barriers and solutions to access identified by community groups and health practitioners. In the final stage, we will involve community members, health practitioners, policy makers and researchers to co-produce community action plans to identify and remove these barriers. This will ensure meaningful involvement for all stakeholders across the project to develop co-produced solutions that can be implemented regionally and nationally.

## For more information about this project



Scan the QR code or contact the Principal investigator, Professor Ewen Speed ([essspeed@essex.ac.uk](mailto:essspeed@essex.ac.uk)).



## What is NIHR ARC East of England?

The National Institute for Health and Care Research Applied Research Collaboration East of England is one of the 15 NIHR ARCs. NIHR ARC East of England collaborates with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, and the Universities of Cambridge, East Anglia, Hertfordshire and Essex along with other NHS Trusts, Local Authorities, Integrated Care Systems, patient-led organisations, charities, and industry partners.

## Get in contact with NIHR ARC East of England

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