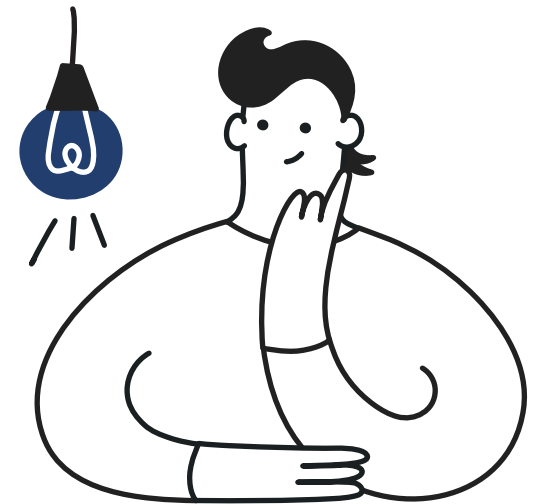


Greater Manchester Research and Engagement Network Forum Relaunch

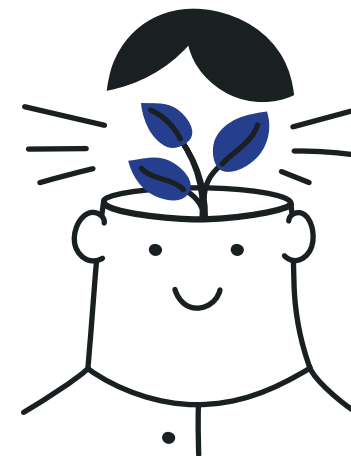
Curated Workshop Outputs



Overarching Themes

We have curated the outputs from the recent Greater Manchester Research and Engagement Network relaunch on 15th June to help to inform what happens next.

When we look across all the outputs from the event here are the themes that stand out.



Connection and Collaboration

- Strong emphasis on building relationships across communities, research and practice
- Desire to meet new people, create partnerships and reduce silos
- Networking seen as a core function and value of the forum
- Collaboration framed as both practical (projects, research) and relational (trust, shared learning)

Hope, Inspiration and Purpose

Participants want to feel:

- Hopeful, energised and inspired
- Part of something meaningful
- Forums seen as spaces for motivation, shared purpose and collective momentum

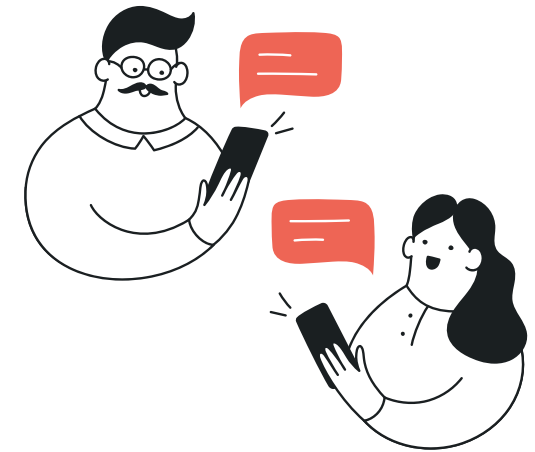
Learning and Knowledge Exchange

High demand for:

- Shared learning across sectors
- Practical examples and case studies
- Better understanding of research and community practice
- Emphasis on two-way learning between communities and academics

Principles and Ways of Working

The following ways of working stood out across all outputs from the events.



Equity, Inclusion and Power-Sharing

Strong focus on:

- Diversity as essential to health equity
- Lived experience as expertise
- Fair recognition and authorship
- Key challenge: moving from consultation to genuine co-production
- Ongoing tension around:
 - Who holds power
 - Whether partnerships are truly equal

Co-production and Participation

Importance of:

- Involving people from the start
- Shared ownership of research
- Active influence (not just feedback)
- Recognition that true participation is complex and requires flexibility

Relationships and Trust

Need to:

- Build long-term relationships beyond projects
- Ensure mutual benefit for all partners
- Create safe, non-judgemental spaces

Practice Insights

Here we highlight what people told us worked and what challenges they faced.

What Works

- Asset-based approaches
- Inclusive and accessible engagement
- Recognising participant benefit early
- Flexibility in approach
- Creating community-focused environments

Challenges

- Sustaining relationships after funding ends
- Balancing funder expectations with participatory practice
- Avoiding bureaucracy while implementing principles
- Maintaining equality in partnerships



Who Needs to Be Involved

There was broad agreement that diverse, cross-sector representation is essential, including:

- Community groups and leaders
- Faith groups
- VCSE organisations
- Researchers and academics
- Policy makers and commissioners
- NHS and frontline staff
- Underrepresented groups (e.g. disabled people, survivors, young people)
- Local businesses and grassroots connectors

The overall message was clear “less professionals only and more community voice alongside professionals and researchers” and taking engagement into communities



Hopes for the Network

Participants want:

- Stronger partnerships and collaboration
- Better infrastructure for networking (e.g. directories, platforms)
- More training and capacity building
- Sustainable research and long-term impact
- Greater community influence on research priorities
- Fair payment and recognition for community researchers

Key Topics and Questions to Explore

- How to prioritise collaboratively
- How to avoid duplication and silo working
- How to sustain impact and relationships
- How to embed inclusion in practice
- How to translate research into real-world impact
- How to support community-led research and infrastructure
- How to ensure ethical, meaningful engagement

Desired Outcomes (How People Want to Feel)

Participants consistently want to leave feeling:

- Hopeful and optimistic
- Heard and valued
- Inspired and energised
- Better connected
- More knowledgeable and confident
- Part of a supportive community



“Asks” (Common Needs)

Across contributors, key asks include:

Connections and Collaboration

- More opportunities to connect with communities, researchers and partners
- Support to build partnerships and networks
- Access to hard-to-reach or underrepresented groups

Learning and Development

- Training in co-production, research and engagement
- Access to best practice, case studies and methods
- Opportunities for peer learning and mentoring

Resources and Support

- Funding and sustainable support
- Access to tools, resources and research infrastructure
- Platforms to share knowledge and opportunities

Inclusion and Impact

- Better ways to:
 - Engage diverse communities
 - Amplify voices
 - Ensure research is relevant and impactful

Communication and Visibility

- Clearer communication channels
- Better awareness of opportunities and ongoing work



“Offers” (What Participants Bring)

Here is what people told us they could bring and contribute to the network.

Knowledge and Expertise

- Research skills (design, delivery, evaluation, writing)
- Community knowledge and lived experience
- Subject expertise (e.g. health, mental health, cancer, inequalities)

Connections and Networks

Links to:

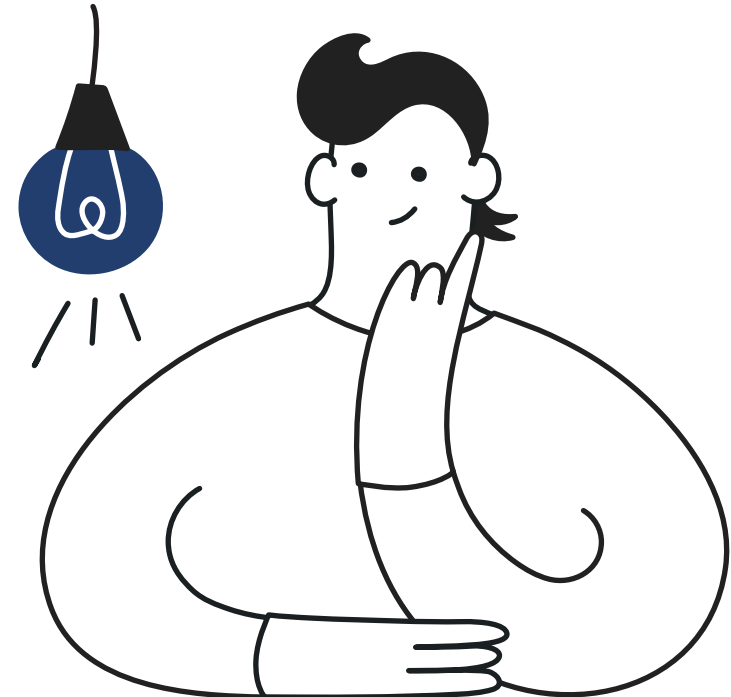
- Community groups and grassroots organisations
- Academic institutions
- Policy and commissioning spaces

Practical Support

- Training and mentoring
- Engagement and facilitation skills
- Access to venues, platforms and communication channels

Values and Energy

- Passion, enthusiasm and willingness to collaborate
- Commitment to inclusion, empathy and respect
- Creative and innovative approaches



Core Values and Culture

Below we look at the values and behaviours those in attendance told us were important as the network develops.

Values Identified

- Inclusion
- Empathy
- Equality
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Shared learning



Key Behaviours

- Co-create
- Collaborate
- Communicate
- Engage
- Empower



Key Insight

A strong unifying message emerged, the network is not just about research, it is about building an inclusive, collaborative ecosystem where communities, practitioners and researchers share power, learn together and create meaningful change. The biggest opportunities lie in:



Turning connection into sustained collaboration



Turning principles into practice



Turning participation into genuine power-sharing