

Item No. 8	Classification: Open	Date: 20 July 2023	Meeting Name: Health and Wellbeing Board
Report title:		Community Update: Building Trust Through Community Engagement	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All Southwark wards and population groups	
From:		Sangeeta Leahy - Director of Public Health Southwark Council	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. The Southwark Health and Wellbeing Board note the recommendations from the project undertaken by Social Finance and Centric.
2. The Health and Wellbeing Board consider any additional actions that could be taken to embed the recommendations and ensure they are central to future engagement work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed long-standing inequalities that affect Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Southwark Stands Together (SST) is Southwark Council's initiative established in response to the killing of George Floyd, the injustice and racism experienced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, and to the inequalities exposed by COVID-19.
4. Initial engagement through SST highlighted that distrust in health and care services can exacerbate existing health inequalities. Through this engagement, local residents shared that distrust can stem from:
 - Poor experiences of services
 - Lack of continuous feedback loops in previous engagement work
 - The long-term impact of colonialism, racist medical practices and racism denial.
5. Southwark Council commissioned Social Finance and Centric to explore how the health and care system can strengthen its engagement work to rebuild trust.
6. Social Finance have experience in projects aimed at bridging the gap between statutory bodies and communities. Social Finance led on the project management and system engagement approach for this work.

7. Centric's model of community research trains up local people as community researchers, empowering them to take ownership of research in their own communities. This allows local people to engage with their networks, maximising the reach of the research. Centric led on the community engagement approach for this work.
8. During this work, Centric recruited six community researchers from Southwark to conduct one-to-one interviews with 30 residents. These interviews explored health and wellbeing issues that matter to residents, with the interview guide shaped by previous engagement and Southwark's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Results from the interviews were then explored further during two workshops, each attended by 40-50 people. Attendees at the workshops included local residents and representatives from Southwark Council, South East London ICB, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and voluntary and community sector organisations. Two further sense-making workshops were held to analyse emerging findings and co-develop recommendations.
9. This work was delivered between April – December 2022.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Recommendations

10. Six recommendations were developed through this work. These describe principles to prioritise in engagement work and reflect what local communities said was important to rebuild trust:
 - a. Demonstrable commitment to on-going engagement: There should be demonstrable commitment to embed continuous engagement with the community at every stage of research, design and delivery. Accountability mechanisms should be explicit within this process, with transparent decision-making.
 - b. Connected engagement work: Health and care partners should avoid approaching communities on issues specific to their organisations. Community engagement should be joined-up across organisations, allowing people to engage at a full-system level.
 - c. Language and terminology: Health and care organisations should examine the language they use when working with seldom-heard communities. Inclusive and accessible language is a key part of promoting a 'no wrong door' approach to meeting needs. Reducing the use of technical terms can help residents engage as equal partners.
 - d. Outreach: People working within health and care organisations should prioritise visiting community spaces and groups to engage, listen and

build relationships with residents.

- e. Investment in community capabilities and training: Upskilling people to participate in engagement confidently can help to empower communities. The community-research model is one way to do this.
- f. Funding for voluntary and community sector: Measures should be taken to reduce barriers to funding for small organisations that are well-connected to the local community. Involving local communities and the voluntary and community sector in decision-making around funding allocation can help to shift power dynamics.

Next steps

- 11. This work has been shared with health and care partners through partnership engagement meetings. This should allow individual organisations to consider how the principles can be followed in future engagement work and connect community engagement work across organisations, helping to embed the second recommendation.
- 12. These recommendations have also helped to shape Partnership Southwark's approach to incorporating lived experience into ways of working. This was an explicit focus of the first workshop. Learning from the work is now being tested through the 1,001 days co-production approach. Five voluntary and community sector organisations were recently paid to sit on the decision-making panel for Partnership Southwark's Neighbourhood Grants panel, testing the final recommendation.
- 13. Community research forms part of Southwark Council's application for National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funding to become a research-driven organisation ('Southwark Collaboration for Research and Evaluation'). If the bid is successful, there will be an opportunity to empower communities by further embedding and expanding community research activity within Southwark, and facilitating access to learning opportunities through a wider collaboration with university and community partners.
- 14. A summary of this work will be published on South East London Integrated Care System's website to ensure learning is shared.

Policy framework implications

- 15. 'Strong and Connected Communities' is one of the five drive areas in [Southwark's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#). An aim within the strategy is to, 'Ensure people shape their local areas and services through collaboration and co-design.' The insights from this work should help health and care partners in their on-going engagement work, particularly in work with communities where distrust is a barrier to working together.

16. The [South East London ICS People and Communities Strategic Framework](#) sets out three commitments in engagement work – being accountable and transparent, decision-making and priority setting in partnership with people and communities, and working with communities in new ways to transform health and care. This framework mirrors the recommendations from the project.
17. This work is in line with Southwark Council's Delivery Plan, particularly the principle of 'Creating a People-Powered Southwark'.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

18. Embedding the recommendations into health and care partners' ways of working should help to give a voice to communities who can be underrepresented in engagement work.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

19. This work explored how to build trust between local residents and health and care partners through engagement, focusing on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in particular. Distrust in services can be a barrier for a number of disadvantaged groups and the recommendations can be embedded across engagement work.

Health impact statement

20. Lack of trust in health and care partners can exacerbate existing health inequalities. This work started from the assumption that building trust is a core part of work to deliver better health outcomes for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Climate change implications

21. There are no immediate climate change implications.

Resource implications

22. There are no resource implications as a direct outcome of this report.

Legal implications

23. There are no legal implications.

Financial implications

24. There are no financial implications.

Consultation

25. This report summarises the findings of engagement work.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27 https://www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/177533/Southwark-s-Joint-Health-Wellbeing-Strategy-2022-27.pdf	Public Health Division, Children and Adults Department	Rebecca Harkes, 020 7525 5000

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Building trust through community engagement – Summary report

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Sangeeta Leahy, Director of Public Health		
Report Author	Rebecca Harkes, Policy Officer for Health Inequalities		
Version	Final		
Dated	07 July 2023		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance		No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			7 July 2023