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How can cancer prevention and early detection research make a difference to communities in GM?

Learnings from the Community Cancer Insight Group (C.C.I.G.)
Listening Session

Tuesday 11th November 2025

What's the C.C.I.G.?

- The Community Cancer Insight Group (C.C.I.G.) is a dedicated public group of 12 community members based in Gorton
- The group was established by:

Cancer Prevention and Early Detection (CPED) theme

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healthy me healthy communities

- The groups aims to continue to build **trusting relationships** between researchers and under-served communities and to inform **health equitable, inclusive approaches** across the CPED theme

What happened at the listening event?

- The listening event explored the C.C.I.G members' views and opinions on **how research can make a difference** (a topic previously prioritised by group members and researchers)
- Four CPED researchers joined the session to listen to members' priorities:
  - Molly Parfett; health psychologist
  - Sam Merriel; academic GP
  - Holly Butterworth; project manager
  - Bruno Simões; biologist

- Following the initial listening part of the session, group members and researchers reflected together on how ideas shared in the session could be meaningfully applied to CPED research

How should you use these learnings?

- We'd encourage you to work through these slides independently or with your team to explore how these learnings could help improve your research and bring about **meaningful change** in your **current projects** and **future grant applications**
- Slides are structured in tables as illustrated here:

What did we hear from community members?	Co-designed ideas for your research
• Key insights from listening to public contributors	• Suggested actions you could apply in your current and planned work co-developed by C.C.I.G. members and researchers

How can CPED research make a difference to communities?

Digital and people-based approaches

- *'AI use can support with accessibility but we all still need human interaction'* – Holly Butterworth

Importance of place

- *'It's important for researchers to go **to** communities*' – Sam Merriel
- *'Raising awareness of cancer research in schools can help our work have an impact'* – Bruno Simões

Research awareness

- *'One of the members noted "there aren't 20 people in this room, there are 20 families". As researchers, let's think about the ripple effect of our work'* – Molly Parfett

Digital and people-based approaches – how do we do both?

What did we hear from community members?	Co-designed ideas for your research
• **AI for accessibility:** Some group members use AI as a fast, convenient way to access information, e.g. helping interpret blood tests found on the NHS app or translating text into other languages. • **Trusted sources:** All trust the NHS but noted barriers to accessing services e.g. increasing reliance on online appointment booking and limited time for patients to discuss concerns with health professionals. Many group members raised concerns about the reliability of information from AI or social media. Speaking in person with health professionals was valued as the most trusted source of information. • **Health and privacy:** As health is personal, many group members said they would prefer not to use AI for health-related discussions or talk about their health in larger groups, due to concerns about confidentiality.	**How can we use digital approaches that are accessible and convenient to support research participation?** • Videos to share stories of lived experiences that people can connect to e.g. of research participation or living with cancer • Targeted social media ads • Use AI to make research information more accessible • Provide research information that can be accessed via smartphones or apps **Opportunities to talk about health in person are important – how can researchers ensure we maintain this as we shift to digital approaches?** • Work with local organisations to build trust and co-design activities which are accessible and inclusive • Offer hybrid engagement options, combining digital tools with in-person opportunities ensures people can choose what feels most comfortable and accessible.

Importance of place – where should research take place?

What did we hear from C.C.I.G. members?	Co-designed ideas for your research
• **Trusted local spaces:** Group members said they would be more receptive to health information when it is shared in places they already trust and regularly use — such as job centres, libraries, GP practices, places of worship, local shops, and community events. • **Youth engagement:** Group members described children as "leaders at home," often relying on them for trusted information. They felt it was important for researchers to work with schools to help normalise conversations about health and cancer from a young age. They also noted that different approaches may be needed to engage young people, as they may not frequent the same trusted local spaces as adults.	**How can we bring research to communities?** • Research hubs, drop-in sessions or stalls at local venues e.g. in primary care with GM Inclusive Research Network • Pop-ups and mobile units for health checks, screening and other research e.g. MFT research van, GMCA van, RDN agile delivery team • Opportunities for public to visit research venues • Partner with VCFSE sector so research part of community events like fundraisers **How can we engage with young people?** • Build relationships with schools • Creative engagement approaches e.g. tailored apps designed for young people, or short videos created by young people for young people

Research awareness – what is research and why do it?

What did we hear from C.C.I.G. members?	Co-designed ideas for your research
• **Information overload:** Members felt overwhelmed by amount of available information and were often unsure which sources they could trust. • **Black box of research:** Most people were unclear about what taking part in research actually involves and did not know where to go to find reliable information. • **Shared values:** Both researchers and the public agreed that research is important for progress and improving people's lives. The public expressed trust in researchers, believing they have 'dug deep' into the evidence. Group members were also keen to help share research information and opportunities with their own networks.	**How can we help people navigate research information?** • Dedicated contact(s) and familiar face(s) for participants involved in PPIE or research • Use centralised information sources e.g. BePartOfResearch **How can research participation be more transparent?** • Clear, visual information on what participation involves • Balance information with both positive and negative perspectives **How can we better partner with public contributors and organisations who are interested in research?** • Learn what is important and what will most benefit communities (consider Respectful Research Charter) • Community champions to help increase research awareness • Build human relationships to break down hierarchies • Researchers share PPIE learnings with other researchers so don't ask communities the same questions

Where can I find out more?

- To find out more about community engagement and inclusive research work in CPED, please email Anya (anya.webber@nhs.net) or Emma (emma.thorpe@nhs.net)
- You can find out more about the C.C.I.G. in this blog post
- This work was funded by the NIHR Manchester BRC and was supported by Vocal.