

Community Cancer Insight Group (C.C.I.G.) Listening Session Summary

Support Networks and Cancer Research

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

The NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre (BRC)'s Cancer Prevention and Early Detection (CPED) theme has conducted extensive work with local communities to identify priorities and recommendations for inclusive research. But there's still important work to be done to apply these learnings.

The C.C.I.G. is a dedicated public group of 12 community members based in Gorton, which was established to continue to build trusting relationships between research and under-served communities and inform health equitable approaches across the CPED theme.

What happened at the listening event?

The C.C.I.G. invited three CPED researchers (Helen Morley, Arbaz Kapadi, Sarah Kitson) to join and listen in.

The discussion explored the role of support networks, including family, friends and the wider community, in cancer research. The C.C.I.G. members had prioritised this topic as part of an inclusive approach to research.

At the session, C.C.I.G. members told us that every person's support network is unique, complex and dynamic. It's important not to underestimate how interconnected people are and the difference support networks can make.

Mapping exercise: Everyone was invited to consider - Who do you support? Who supports you? Responses included "My allotment group", "The local food bank", "Faith in Allah" and much more. *"I was surprised how many circles are involved in our self-care"* – C.C.I.G. member



What can you do differently?

Address stigma

“I wouldn’t tell my Mum [about cancer]” – C.C.I.G. member

The fear and stigma linked to cancer is real. Group members stressed the need to explore new ways to talk about cancer in the community. How could your research be used to address this?

Champion support

“I’d talk to my pastor. They’re respected and trusted and work to help me.” – C.C.I.G. member

The C.C.I.G. told us that people don’t often act in isolation. They highlighted the benefits of bringing a partner along to an appointment or speaking to a faith leader about participating in research. Could simple changes be made to your research or your communication about it to acknowledge and promote more support on an individual level?

Harness community expertise

“Researchers should ask for help in the community.” – C.C.I.G. member

C.C.I.G. members emphasised the power of relationships with trusted individuals and organisations in communities. Could these connections have a ripple effect for your work, helping to share key messages or research opportunities throughout existing networks?

Innovate your communications

“I’d share research opportunities with my friends on WhatsApp” – C.C.I.G. member

The group suggested creating recruitment adverts that community members could share via messaging platforms. Could social media or messaging be integrated into your research?