

Introduction to the Greater Manchester Cancer Vanguard 'Health as a social movement' project

Our aim is to mobilise a citizen-led social movement for cancer prevention by working through the voluntary sector. This project is harnessing the energy of the voluntary sector and Greater Manchester (GM) citizens which is currently centred on cancer research, treatment and survivorship to understand what motivates people to make lifestyle choices and help tip the balance towards prevention. We are connecting what already exists, drawing on the intelligence of communities that face health inequality and identifying ways to help change happen.

This is the second of four projects which make up the prevention workstream of the GM Cancer Vanguard. This social movement project is being commissioned by the GM Health and Social Care Partnership with funding secured from a successful bid to the NHS England Health as a Social Movement Programme. The work is being facilitated through Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW) working in close partnership with GM and borough level voluntary sector leaders.

Main deliverables

- Identifying, networking and supporting the recruitment of 10,000 cancer champions over an 18-month period (by 2018) providing a large scale network of volunteers promoting cancer behaviour change interventions.
- Maximising the potential provided by digital technologies, including social media, to connect and empower cancer prevention groups and networks.

- Understanding the issues and barriers faced by communities in the lifestyle choices they make, the uptake of screening, and understanding of the risks and symptoms related to cancer.

Opportunities for a social movement

We know that we need:

- a radical upgrade in prevention and public health
- a fully engaged population – taking ownership and responsibility for their health and well-being
- a new relationship between citizen, state and society – at the heart of devolution

A citizen-led social movement approach is central to achieving this with huge opportunities for the voluntary sector, public sector and most importantly for local communities.

Strands of activity

- **Identifying, connecting and supporting** groups, networks and campaigns involved in and around cancer prevention; the root causes of cancer and developing relationships with them.
- **Supporting four individual communities which are tackling the causes of cancer** but not self-identifying this activity as such. These communities have a poor quality of health and lack of economic opportunity with the latter focus making links to wider GM work to reform public services.
- **Scaling up collective action and campaigning** through the relationships and networks built and grassroots identification of priorities to realise the social movement. A key element of this is the identification, recruitment and training of 20 social movement champions.

- **Developing and spot purchasing campaign resources, training and support** to link the right support to champions and groups quickly and flexibly.
- **Intelligence gathering** to ensure understanding about barriers to, and opportunities for, individual and community behaviour change.
- **Expert reference group** formation that is cross-sector, cross-specialism to assess progress of the project, ensure coherent campaign elements are developed and draw on expertise to build connections that create change and build momentum.

Recommendation

This work connects to the vanguard's national work with the People and Communities Board on the six principles for new care models¹ (see right). As with this project there is a golden thread through these six principles which is the role of the voluntary sector. We would highly recommend partnership building and project co-design with the voluntary sector in any of these areas to maximise potential impacts.



1 - See p8 of 'New Care Models: empowering patients and communities - A call to action for a directory of support' - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/vanguards-support-directory.pdf>

Social movements – some background reading and evidence

- The RSA's Health as a Social Movement programme website - <https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/public-services-and-communities-folder/health-as-a-social-movement>
- **Towards a Million Change Agents**, Bate, P., Bevan, H., and Robert, G. (NHS: 2004) - <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1133/1/million.pdf>
- **A guide to community-centred approaches to health and wellbeing**, South, J. (PHE and NHS England: 2015) - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417515/A_guide_to_community-centred_approaches_for_health_and_wellbeing_full_report.pdf
- **Nice Guidelines: Community Engagement** [Evidence], March 2016 - <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng44/evidence>

For more information please contact Ben Gilchrist, VSNW Social Movement Lead – ben.gilchrist@actiontogether.org.uk or on Twitter @bengilchrist