

NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Involvement Network Update –

18 August 2026

Welcome to the NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire Involvement Network update

- [Preparing for Care Survey \(Worcestershire\) – Have your say – VCSE Organisations and Worcestershire County Council](#)
- [Employment Rights for Unpaid Carers – Consultation – Have your say – Department for Business and Trade](#)
- [VCSFE Funding Opportunity – Research Engagement Network Grants – Community Power](#)
- [Closing soon - Help shape rural mental health research – Opportunity to be involved - University of Worcester, supported by the James Lind Alliance](#)
- [Local health news and campaigns](#)
- [Additional engagement & information links](#)
- [Engagement team links](#)

Preparing for Care Survey (Worcestershire) – Have your say – VCSE Organisations and Worcestershire County Council

VCSE partners, with the support of Worcestershire County Council and its partner agencies, are carrying out a survey to better understand how people think about planning for future care and support.

Your feedback will help them improve the information, advice and services available across Worcestershire, so that people can make informed choices, plan ahead with confidence and remain independent for as long as possible.

Taking part is voluntary, and there are no right or wrong answers.

The organisers are interested in your experiences, views and ideas, whether or not you have thought about future care before.

The findings will help inform the future planning and development of local care and support services.

Survey: Please use this link to complete the survey:

<https://www.cabr.org.uk/preparingforcare> The survey will remain open until the end of August.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer only the questions you feel comfortable answering, and feel free to skip any questions if you prefer.

Please note: Some of these questions may prompt you to think about your future health or wellbeing. If you find this upsetting, please take a break or stop completing the questionnaire. If completing this survey raises concerns about your own health or wellbeing, please consider speaking with someone you trust, your GP or another healthcare professional.

[Top](#)

Employment Rights for Unpaid Carers – Consultation – Have your say – Department for Business and Trade

The [Department for Business and Trade](#) has recently launched a consultation on employment rights for unpaid carers, providing an important opportunity to shape future support for the millions of people balancing work and unpaid care.

To help people respond, [Carers UK](#) has produced a [briefing for individual carers](https://www.carersuk.org/media/fawfrmrxc/carers-uk-briefing-for-individuals-responding-to-the-governments-consultation-on-employment-rights-for-carers-july-2026-final.pdf) (long link: <https://www.carersuk.org/media/fawfrmrxc/carers-uk-briefing-for-individuals-responding-to-the-governments-consultation-on-employment-rights-for-carers-july-2026-final.pdf>) setting out the key issues and policy recommendations.

Share your views: Responses can be submitted online at:

https://ditresearch.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3rwllMYn7jl2Tlk

or by emailing unpaidcarers@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Deadline: The consultation closes at **11.59pm on Tuesday 1 September 2026**.

[Top](#)

VCSFE Funding Opportunity – Research Engagement Network Grants – Community Power

Small Grants Fund for Herefordshire and Worcestershire Now Open.

As part of its Research Support Network, Community Power is pleased to share an exciting funding opportunity through its project, the Research Engagement Network (REN), for voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations working across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Grants of £1,000 available, with organisations able to apply for up to £5,000 in total. These are for projects that:

- Raise awareness and understanding of health and care research.
- Encourage people from your communities to learn about and take part in research.
- Help ensure research better reflects the diverse communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Community Power welcomes applications from organisations and community groups of all sizes.

To support organisations through the application process, Community Power is also holding two short online Q&A sessions where applicants can find out more about the fund and ask any questions before applying.

Q&A Sessions - Wednesday 3 September 2026:

- Session 1 - 12:30pm–1:00pm
- Session 2 - 6:30pm–7:00pm

Applications will be awarded on a first come basis until the funding has been allocated, so Community Power encourages organisations to apply early. **The final application deadline is 9:00am on Monday 14 September 2026.**

For more information, including the full specification, application link and supporting information, organisations can visit Community Power's grant application page at <https://communitypower.org.uk/small-grants-fund-vcfse-sector>. Questions can be directed to deb@communitypower.org.uk

Community Power would love to hear from organisations with strong links to their communities and innovative ideas for increasing awareness of health and care research. Community Power would be grateful if this opportunity could be shared through other relevant networks.

[Top](#)

Closing soon - Help shape rural mental health research – Opportunity to be involved - University of Worcester, supported by the James Lind Alliance

Opportunity closing soon - Help shape rural mental health research

The University of Worcester, supported by the James Lind Alliance, is inviting expressions of interest from people across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to join a new Steering Group exploring how inequalities in care and support can be addressed for people living with, or at risk of, serious mental illness (SMI) in rural communities. This opportunity is closing soon, with **expressions of interest due by Friday 21 August 2026.**

What is the project about? - The Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) will bring together people with lived experience, unpaid carers and professionals to identify the issues that matter most locally and help shape priorities for future research. The project will explore questions such as:

- What helps people access support in rural areas?
- How can services better support people living in rural communities?
- How do factors such as age, disability, poverty, caring responsibilities and social isolation affect access to support?

The aim is to identify the Top 10 research priorities that matter most to people affected by serious mental illness in rural communities. These priorities will then help inform future research through the Rural Mental Health Research Programme (THRIVE).

Who is the project team looking for? - There are 12 places available on the Steering Group, with membership broadly split between service providers and people with lived experience and unpaid carers. People can apply if they:

- Live or work in Herefordshire and/or Worcestershire
- Have lived experience of serious mental illness
- Are an unpaid carer of someone with serious mental illness
- Directly deliver health or social care to people with SMI, including those working in the voluntary and community sector
- Are able to take part over the next 18 months

Relevant networks and connections that could help the project reach a diverse range of people are also desirable.

More information about the Steering Group can be found here:

<https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/jla-guidebook-the-psp-steering-group>

What would being a Steering Group member involve? - The first meeting will take place on Friday 2 October 2026, 10am–2pm, face-to-face, with lunch provided.

After this, meetings are expected to take place online approximately once a month, with involvement of around 1–2 hours per month.

Members will help shape the project, including developing survey questions, identifying ways to reach marginalised groups and sharing information through their networks. The team will work flexibly wherever possible to accommodate people's individual circumstances.

Support, payment and expenses - The project team is committed to making involvement as accessible as possible and is happy to discuss any support needs.

Patient, public and unpaid carer Steering Group members will be offered payment and reimbursement of expenses in line with relevant NIHR guidance and University of Worcester policy.

How to express interest - Expressions of interest need to be submitted by **Friday 21 August 2026**.

To express interest, applicants should either complete the online Expression of Interest form:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QYA4YykDPEOksRmij84xxiZVZjGKgm1BixJI0f61Xx9UOVNOTUs5NjdITEtTOUtOWFlaWDNMRkJDRC4u>

Anyone who would prefer a paper form or requires accessibility support can contact: thrive@worc.ac.uk

Informal queries can also be directed to Professor Liz Hughes, PSP Lead, at elizabeth.hughes2@worc.ac.uk.

Unable to join the Steering Group? - People who submit an expression of interest but are not selected for one of the 12 Steering Group places will still have other opportunities to contribute to the project.

These may include completing surveys, taking part in engagement activities, contributing to the final priority-setting workshop and helping to share the final research priorities. Everyone who submits an expression of interest will be contacted directly with the outcome.

Please share this opportunity with colleagues, volunteers, service users, carers and networks who may have relevant experience and would like to help shape future research and services for people living with serious mental illness in rural communities before expressions of interest close.

[Top](#)

Additional engagement & information links

- NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS: <https://www.hwics.org.uk/news/latest-news>
- NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB Board Meetings. Dates, meeting papers and information on how to view the meetings can be found here: <https://herefordshireandworcestershire.icb.nhs.uk/meetings>
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust: <https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/news>
- Herefordshire General Practice <https://www.herefordshiregeneralpractice.co.uk/news>
- Vertis Health: <https://www.vertishealth.org.uk/>
- Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust: <https://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/news-and-media/in-the-news>
- Wye Valley NHS Trust: <https://www.wyevalley.nhs.uk/news-events/trust-newsroom.aspx>

National:

- Government policies and consultations: <https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations?parent=department-of-health-and-social-care&order=updated-newest>
- NHS England, surveys and consultations: <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/>

Newsletters:

- Voices United Newsletters, Worcestershire County Council – this includes engagement opportunities for children and young people: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/schools-education-and-learning/send-local-offer/co-production-and-how-get-involved-send/voices-united-newsletters-send-co-production>

[Top](#)

Engagement team links

- Current Engagement opportunities: <https://www.hwics.org.uk/get-involved>

[Top](#)

Best wishes,

The Engagement Team

The Engagement Team can be contacted by emailing: hw.engage@nhs.net

Please email if you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list. NHS

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<https://herefordshireandworcestershire.icb.nhs.uk/documents/policies/communication-involvement-and-engagement-policies>

www.hwics.org.uk