

Peer Researcher Training Programme

Information for interested VCS organisations



What is HDRC Surrey?

The Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) Surrey aims to make Surrey a healthier place by strengthening how local government uses research to inform decisions that reflect community needs.

HDRC Surrey brings together the local authorities, the University of Surrey, voluntary and community organisations (Good Company and Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum – SMEF), and our residents and communities.



In 2020, people in Surrey's most deprived areas lived up to 10 years less than those in wealthier areas. HDRC Surrey is working to address these inequalities.

We're driven by evidence and collaboration: understanding what shapes health and working closely with partners and the public to ensure research makes a real impact.

We focus on the wider factors affecting health like poverty, housing, transport, education, and employment to reduce inequalities and improve lives.

Our goal is to build stronger systems for research, support knowledge sharing, and grow local capacity to understand and act on what truly affects health in Surrey

What is the Peer Researcher training programme?

HDRC Surrey is delivering a Peer Researcher training programme. We will work with local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to provide a basic research training programme and ongoing research support to 6–12 community members, for them to become Peer Researchers.

Peer research is when people with personal experience of an issue take part in conducting research on that topic.

It aims to empower people to affect positive change by participating in research with their own communities, on subjects that matter to them.

We are looking to work with organisations interested in tackling health inequalities, and are committed to the wider aims of HDRC Surrey. We would like to work with VCS organisations to identify:

1 staff member who would like to be the lead for this programme within their organisation

and

1 or 2 people with lived experience of the issue that your organisation works on, who would like to become Peer Researchers.

Each organisation will bring a new research project / idea for a project to the programme, so that the Peer Researchers can begin working on a live project after receiving training.



WHAT COMMITMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED?

1. Identify 1 or 2 people from the community you serve (with lived experience) that are interested in taking part in the programme



2. VCS staff lead to commit to attending x4 training sessions alongside their Peer Researcher

3. VCS staff lead to support Peer Researcher in terms of well-being & guidance on the specific research aims (with general research support provided by HDRC Surrey)



Training timeline

January 2026

Introductory meeting
with VCS leads
To explain and explore the
planned programme and
make any changes.

March 2026

Training session 1 (half
day)
VCS leads & Peer
Researcher
Introduction to research
Ethics in research
Safeguarding
Research methods
overview

April 2026

Training session 2 (half day)
VCS leads & Peer Researcher
Research methods
Developing research tools

Additional ad-hoc
mentoring & support
provided throughout entire
programme

May 2026

Training session 3 (half
day)
VCS leads & Peer
Researcher
Conducting
qualitative/quantitative
research

July 2026

Training session 4 (half day)
VCS leads & Peer Researchers
Analysis & writing up results

Aug/Sep 2026

Research projects finalised,
including any deliverables
(physical outputs, such as a
presentation, report or
artwork)