

Connecting Health Communities 2024-2027

Meet the areas

Participating areas

Key:

New phase: Areas receiving the 30-month intensive support (2024 – 2027)

Phase 2: Areas receiving the 24-month intensive support, currently in their actions stage (2023 – 2025)

Areas we worked with in Phase – 1 of this work (2021 – 2023), either received bespoke support of two workshops or the intensive support. Read their stories and the progress they made: [Not just ticking boxes - IVAR](#)



About Connecting Health Communities

Connecting Health Communities, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, is a 2.5-year initiative supporting cross-sector partnerships to address health inequalities through collaboration between statutory stakeholders, the voluntary sector, and communities facing health disparities.

IVAR leads the facilitation of cross-sector groups with a focus on strengthening the foundations of partnership working and supporting local leaders to deliver improved health outcomes for vulnerable groups. This is facilitated by building the evidence base and case for change, adapting systems and structures, initiating and introducing new services, and identifying and achieving opportunities for a more sustainable and fairer model of healthcare.

Update on the new areas

For phase 3 recruitment, we received 55 applications and selected four focus areas: Barnet and Enfield, Birmingham, Leicester and Leicestershire, and Somerset. Each area has a unique health inequality focus, with partnership goals aimed at impactful, community-driven outcomes.

We are currently having scoping conversations in each of the four areas with the aim of forming cross-sector steering groups with representation from VCSE leaders, local NHS systems and the local authority. Each of these groups will be co-designing a tangible focus for their work to tackle local health inequalities. Involving communities in these initial conversations is crucial, so many have connected with residents before their first partnership session through focus groups, surveys, and informal conversations on the doorstep.

Current thinking in each area:

- **Barnet & Enfield** aim to enhance access for disabled patients through collaboration among disabled people's organisations, the voluntary sector, the NHS, and local public health.
- **Birmingham** aims to strengthen partnerships to address health disparities affecting sex workers, ensuring their voices drive improved healthcare access.
- **Leicester & Leicestershire** aim to develop a comprehensive homeless health package, bringing together diverse voices and key organisations to explore strategies for effective healthcare delivery.
- **Somerset** aims to develop a scalable approach to improve discharge experiences for people with dementia, informed by patient, family, caregiver, and health system perspectives.

Between November 2024 and February 2025, our aim is to understand the local context for partnership working, build relationships with the leads and hold our first in-person steering group in the four areas.