

Learning for Change Cohort 2 Participant Information Pack

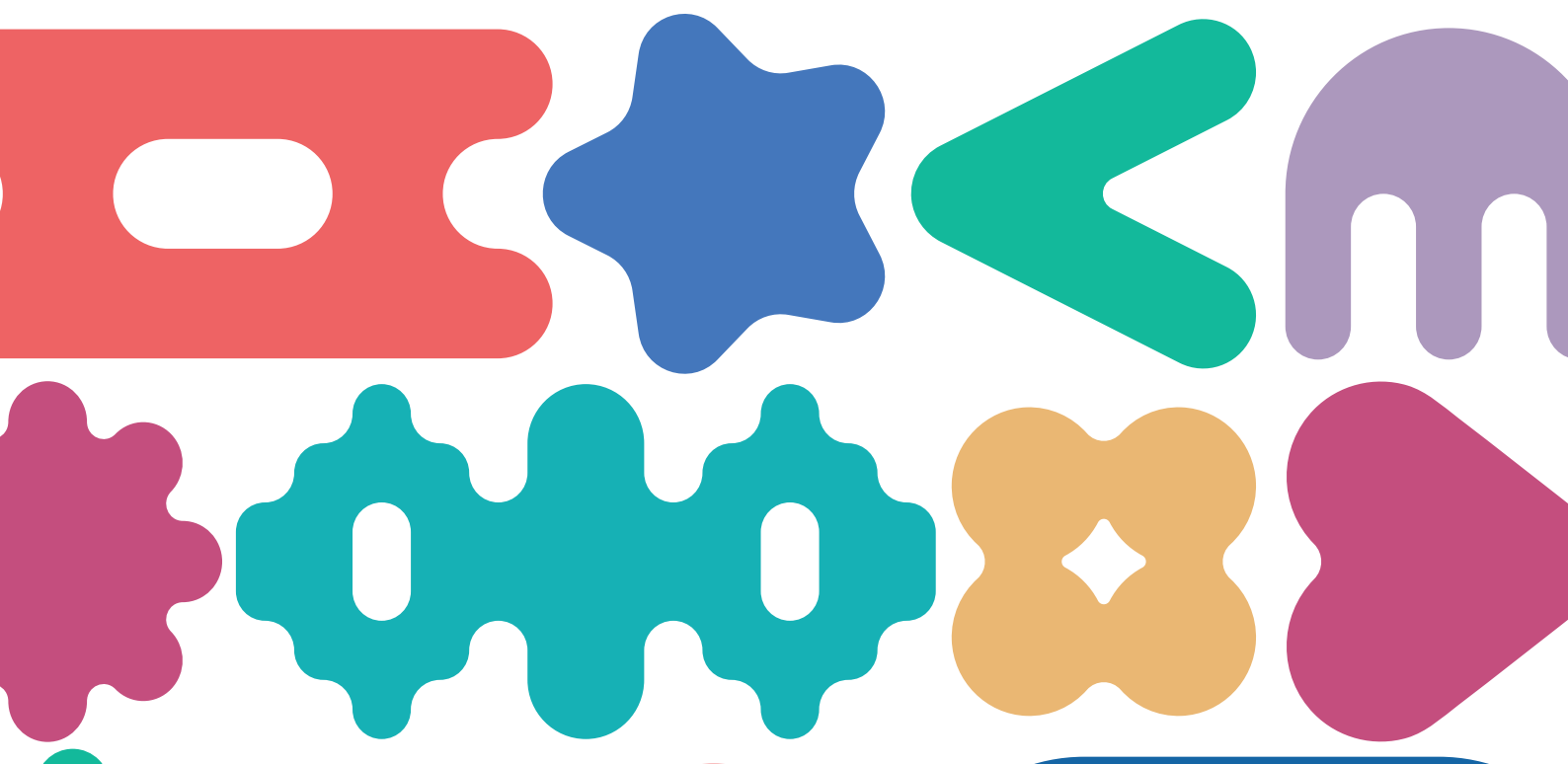
Embedding the GM Respectful Research Charter
Through Practice, Relationships and Action

Programme Dates:

December 2026 – May 2027

Applications Close:

15 November 2026



Welcome

We are delighted to invite applications for Learning for Change Cohort 2, a unique learning journey bringing together researchers, VCFSE organisations and community members from across Greater Manchester to explore what respectful, inclusive and community-led research looks like in practice. Building on the success of the first cohort, this programme has been redesigned using participant feedback and learning to create even more opportunities for relationship-building, shared learning and practical action.

Learning for Change is not a traditional training programme. It is a collaborative space where people learn with and from one another, challenge assumptions, build trusted relationships and develop new ways of working together. At its heart is the belief that respectful research is built through relationships, shared power and meaningful participation.

What is Learning for Change?

Learning for Change is a cohort-based learning programme designed to support implementation of the Greater Manchester Respectful Research Charter. It brings together researchers, VCFSE organisations and community members to explore how the Charter's principles can be embedded into everyday practice.

- Challenge thinking, practice and leadership
- Connect people, places and systems
- Mobilise and share knowledge, skills and learning
- Strengthen collective capacity for change
- Reimagine and reshape the future together

The programme aims to:

- Build confidence in applying the Respectful Research Charter in practice
- Strengthen relationships between communities, VCFSE organisations and researchers
- Explore power-sharing and shared decision-making
- Increase understanding of accessibility, inclusion and community leadership

- Create opportunities for collaborative mentoring and partnership development
- Support future research collaborations rooted in trust and mutual benefit
- Capture and share stories of change to influence wider practice across Greater Manchester

What We Learned From Cohort 1

The first cohort demonstrated that meaningful change happens through relationships, reflection and ongoing engagement rather than information transfer alone. Participants identified several important insights:



Trust is the Foundation

Trust develops through relationships, shared experiences and psychological safety. When people felt safe, conversations became more honest and collaborations became stronger.



Power Needs to be Discussed

Participants valued having open conversations about power, ethics and decision-making. Naming power dynamics helped build stronger and more equitable partnerships.



Inclusion is an Ongoing Practice

Participants developed a much broader understanding of accessibility, recognising that it extends beyond communication to include responsiveness, inclusion, trust-building and creating welcoming environments.



Face-to-Face Connection Matters

One of the strongest messages from participants was the importance of spending time together in person. Community-based, face-to-face learning helped deepen relationships, trust and understanding.



Learning Happens Between the Sessions

Collaborative mentoring, WhatsApp discussions, micro-challenges and informal conversations were consistently highlighted as some of the most valuable elements of the programme.

These insights have shaped the design of Cohort 2.

Who Can Apply?

We are looking for up to 40 participants, with equal representation from:

- Researchers, research leads /operational staff
- VCFSE organisations, people with lived experience of issues relevant to health and social inequalities, community groups

You do not need to be an expert in research to apply. We are looking for people who are curious, willing to learn, prepared to share their experiences and committed to building more respectful and inclusive approaches to research.

Programme Overview

Learning for Change Cohort 2 will run from December 2026 to May 2027 and includes:

- Six face-to-face workshops
- Collaborative mentoring
- WhatsApp learning community
- Weekly micro-challenges
- Printed learning journal
- Shared resources and tools
- Embedded evaluation and reflection activities
- Opportunities to develop future partnerships and collaborations



Workshop Programme

Workshop	Charter Themes	Together we will:
Workshop 1: Respectful Beginnings Building Trust and Shared Purpose 1 December 2026	Respect for Community Values Community Leadership	• Explore personal and organisational values • Build relationships across the cohort • Learn about the Respectful Research Charter • Take part in a Charter Gallery of Ideas • Develop a shared learning agreement • Begin collaborative mentoring relationships
Workshop 2: Communities First Understanding Community Leadership 18 January 2027	Community Leadership Respect for Community Values	• Explore community leadership in research • Learn from community-led case studies • Hear from community leaders and practitioners • Explore barriers and opportunities for meaningful participation
Workshop 3: Power, Ethics and Shared Decision-Making 23 February 2027	Community Leadership Mutually Beneficial Relationships	• Explore power dynamics in research • Use practical power-mapping tools • Consider ethical dilemmas and real-world scenarios • Develop approaches for shared decision-making

Workshop 4: Accessible and Inclusive Research in Practice 18 March 2027	Accessible Approaches Embedded Research in Communities	• Explore accessibility beyond communication • Undertake accessibility audits • Review inclusive engagement methods • Learn from lived experience perspectives
Workshop 5: From Relationships to Research Partnerships 13 April 2027	Mutually Beneficial Relationships Embedded Research in Communities	• Identify opportunities for future collaboration • Explore funding and partnership opportunities • Develop new research and engagement ideas • Strengthen connections made throughout the programme
Workshop 6: Stories of Change, Legacy and Future Action 12 May 2027	Bringing all Charter Principles Together	• Reflect on the learning journey • Share stories of change • Explore future opportunities • Celebrate achievements • Create plans for ongoing collaboration and action

The Spaces Between the Workshops

Participants in Cohort 1 told us that some of the most important learning happened between sessions. Cohort 2 will continue to place a strong emphasis on these spaces.



Collaborative Mentoring

Each participant will be matched with someone from a different background or sector.

This is not traditional mentoring. It is a reciprocal learning relationship where both people act as mentor and learner, sharing knowledge, experiences and perspectives as equals.



WhatsApp Learning Community

A dedicated space to:

- Stay connected
- Share resources
- Ask questions
- Reflect on learning
- Celebrate achievements

Participants from Cohort 1 described the WhatsApp community as one of the most valuable aspects of the programme.



Weekly Micro-Challenges

Small practical activities designed to help participants:

- Apply learning in real-world settings
- Reflect on practice
- Try new approaches
- Embed learning over time

These activities are intentionally small and manageable, helping learning become part of everyday practice.



Learning Journal

Each participant will receive a printed Learning for Change journal which can be used to:

- Record reflections
- Capture insights
- Support mentoring conversations
- Track personal learning and action plans

This responds directly to feedback from Cohort 1.

What Will You Gain?

By taking part in Learning for Change Cohort 2 you will gain:

- Practical experience of applying the GM Respectful Research Charter
- New relationships across research, community and VCFSE sectors
- Increased confidence in collaborative and community-led approaches
- Access to tools, resources and learning materials
- Opportunities for future research and partnership development
- A supportive peer network
- A chance to influence how respectful research develops across Greater Manchester

Most importantly, you will become part of a growing movement committed to creating more inclusive, equitable and impactful research.

Participation Payments for VCSE Organisations

We recognise the valuable time, expertise and insight that VCFSE organisations bring to the Learning for Change programme. To support meaningful participation and reduce barriers to involvement, VCFSE organisations selected to take part in Cohort 2 will receive payment for their time and contribution to the programme.

The payment is intended to recognise the commitment involved in attending workshops, participating in collaborative learning activities and sharing organisational and community expertise throughout the programme.

For further information about payment arrangements, eligibility and claiming processes, please contact Aneela McAvoy, who will be happy to provide more details and answer any questions.

If you would like to discuss participation payments before applying, please email **Aneela McAvoy** directly arc-gm@nihr.ac.uk

Who are Greater Manchester Research Engagement Network (GM REN)

The Greater Manchester Research Engagement Network (GM REN) is a partnership working to strengthen relationships between communities, voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations, researchers and public services across Greater Manchester.

GM REN exists to ensure that research is shaped by the people and communities it affects, helping to create more equitable, inclusive and impactful research. It supports opportunities for meaningful community involvement in research, promotes collaborative working, and champions approaches that value lived experience alongside academic and professional expertise.

A key focus of GM REN's work is supporting the implementation of the Greater Manchester Respectful Research Charter, which sets out principles for conducting research that is community-led, accessible, inclusive and based on mutually beneficial relationships. Through programmes such as Learning for Change, GM REN brings together diverse partners to build trust, share learning and develop practical approaches that improve how research is designed, delivered and used across Greater Manchester.

By connecting people, organisations and ideas, GM REN is helping to create a research culture where communities are not simply participants in research but active partners in shaping questions, generating knowledge and driving change.



Who Are Collaborate Out Loud CIC?

Collaborate Out Loud CIC is a Greater Manchester-based social enterprise with a mission to create simple, surprising and social spaces for innovation and change. We work across communities, organisations and public services to create equitable and inclusive spaces where people can learn, connect and take action together.

We are working in partnership with the Greater Manchester Research Engagement Network (GM REN) to design and deliver Learning for Change Cohort 2.

Commitment Required

To get the most from the programme, participants are expected to:

- Attend all six workshops wherever possible
- Engage in collaborative mentoring conversations
- Participate in the WhatsApp learning community
- Complete occasional micro-challenges and reflections
- Contribute to learning and evaluation activities
- Approach the programme with curiosity, openness and respect for different perspectives





**Applications Open
October 2026**

**Applications Close
15 November 2026**

**Participants Notified
Late November 2026**

Workshop 1
1 December 2026

Workshop 2
18 January 2027

Workshop 3
23 February 2027

Workshop 4
18 March 2027

Workshop 5
13 April 2027

Workshop 6
12 May 2027

Apply Now



There are 40 places available on Learning for Change Cohort 2, with places allocated equally between researchers and VCFSE/community participants.



Researchers
Application Form



Community/VCFSE
Sector Application
Form



Application deadline: 15 November 2026

We look forward to learning, connecting and creating change together.