

Your world and your health

The Strategy Unit is an NHS organisation that is helping other parts of the NHS in the Black Country and West Birmingham to learn more about how the mental and physical health of local people is affected by the world in which they live. This is part of the work of the Healthier Futures Partnership and its new Academy - <https://www.healthierfutures.co.uk/>.

We are looking to gather brief stories of the experience of local citizens that will help leaders to understand how the whole context of people's lives shapes their health. We intend the stories to be illustrative rather than representative of every type of experience. So, in talking of 'your world' we are thinking about things like:

- Employment and income
- Pollution
- Housing and homelessness
- Crime and/or experience of the justice system
- Ethnicity and gender
- Education – including ability to access and use digital/online services
- How physical illness affects mental health, and mental health conditions affect physical health.

We are inviting any local voluntary and community sector organisations that wish to, to hold a short focus group discussion (probably with an existing group for convenience) **by mid-August**. We would like groups to send us a brief note – just a few pages – that includes:

- A summary of the experience and views of the group
- A number of quotes from participants that illustrate the themes summarised. Ideally we would like to be able to use people's first names (and a photo of the individual or group would be welcome, too) but we are happy for these to be anonymised, and to be led by you on how we describe the group/your organisation.

These stories will form part of a short study that is due to be considered by the NHS and Local Authority partners in the Autumn. We also hope to promote it through websites and other media.

If you are willing to participate, or would like to know more, please contact either:

- David Frith – 07720 341303, david.frith@nhs.net
- James de Lacy – 07809 320239, james.delacy@nhs.net

A simple guide is provided on the next page.

Many thanks for any help you can give.

'your world, your health' - focus group guide

1. Identify one or more groups that could contribute to the themes outline – ideal group size is 6-12 – and seek their agreement to participate.
2. Decide how the group will meet – we can assist with MS Teams or Zoom if you wish. If you're keen to participate but getting a group isn't possible, you may have another way of gathering and summarising the same information.
3. Seek consent, using your standard procedures, for whether individuals are willing for their first names to be used with any specific quotation, and if they are happy for us to use groups or individual photos for the purpose described.
4. Designate members of your organisation to act as moderator (asking questions and gently probing for more detail where appropriate) and as notetaker (recording the main themes discussed and any particularly powerful/representative quotes). If you would like to participate but do not feel able to facilitate your group, we may be able to assist in a small number of cases.
5. Ensure that any physical meeting complies with social distancing guidance, and that it is protected from interruptions.
6. Explain to the group the purpose of the project and how the information will be used.
7. Explore with your group these questions (say 20-30 minutes for each question):
 - a. **How does the world you live in affect your physical and mental health?**

If it helps the group, mention things like unemployment, income, pollution, housing and homelessness, crime and/or experience of the justice system, ethnicity and gender, education.
 - b. **What changes in your world would make the greatest different to your mental and physical health? You might want to think of how things might have been different in the past as well as how you'd like them to change in future.**
 - c. **In what ways has the Covid pandemic and its lockdown affected your world and your physical and mental health?**

It is not necessary to ask the questions exactly as written. Please do feel free to adapt them appropriately for the needs of your group.
8. Please thank the group on behalf of the Healthier Futures Partnership.
9. Forward you summary of themes discussed and illustrative quotes to James de Lacy and David Frith.

Thank you!