



STAFFS CAN

12th July 2024



What we focused on at Staffs CAN

What is Embrace Your Place?

Playing the Game

What our team has going on

Networking and what you have going on.

Staffs CAN Review

What we did

Twenty-five people came to this Staffs CAN with a mix of community members and representatives from across the community.

This Staffs CAN offered an update of everything that the [Public Engagement and Research \(PEaR\) Team](#) has going on, an introduction to the Embrace Your Place project, and an opportunity for people to network with each other.



Embrace Your Place

What is Embrace Your Place?

Embrace Your Place is a way for people in Staffordshire to tell us which research matters to them and their community.

We think that research should include everyone and want to make sure that the research that is done in Staffordshire considers the priorities of local people, organisations and businesses.

Embrace Your Place aims to answer two questions:

- How can research make a difference in Staffordshire?
- What are the research priorities of the community that will make a difference to Staffordshire?

We'll ask people to take part in a few different ways:

- Taking part in a game
- Chatting as a group
- A one-to-one conversation

Community Connectors

We also want to invite members of the community and people that come to Staffs CAN to be 'Community Connectors' for this project.

As a Community Connector you would reach out into your community and speak to people about their priorities in the county.

As a Community Connector you'd run an Embrace Your Place session with people you know or people that attend your community group/organisation and send us the feedback.

These sessions will be run alongside the ones that our team from the university will be running sessions over the next year too.

Activity To get us started.

We asked people in the room three questions to get a conversation about research started. These were:

- What is research?
- What does a researcher look like?
- What does a researcher do?

Using airdry clay, people in the room sculpted a 'researcher' and other things that they associate with research.



Embrace Your Place Game

We used the Embrace Your Place game to have conversations about research in Staffordshire with people that came to Staffs CAN.

People rolled the dice and moved their counter from the south of Staffordshire towards the north. Along the way, people landed on spaces that required them to answer a question relating to research in Staffordshire.

The things that people told us will be used in the project. Additionally, recommendations on changes to how the game is played will be included in the final developments as we move into the next few months.

Since this CAN meeting, we have developed a tabletop version of the game, providing a more flexible option for community settings that may be limited on space.

If you are interested in playing the game, being a Community Connector, or hosting an Embrace Your Place session in your community space, please email connectedcommunities@staffs.ac.uk



What we have got going on

The session opened with an update from the [Public Engagement and Research \(PEaR\) Team](#).

The team shared a range of things that they have been working on over the past few months, including.

National Civic Impact Accelerator (NCIA)



The [NCIA programme](#) aims to:

- Enhance the higher education sector's civic activities for local societal, economic, and environmental benefits.
- Maximise universities' contributions to societal challenges and policy priorities.

Staffordshire University and representatives from their civic and community partners were active members of three action learning groups in the first half of the programme:

1. Understanding civic impact
2. Embedding civic engagement into organisational strategy
3. Balancing the needs of students, staff and communities.

Staffordshire University are proud to be one of 14 universities involved in Phase 1 of the NCIA Action Learning Programme.

As a result of their learning in these groups, work is under way to grow a collaboration between VAST and Staffordshire University which will support students into volunteering roles in community settings in a way that brings benefits to all parties.

Raising Voices: Taking Action- Chat for Change



Raising Voices: Taking Action is a project led by All the Small Things CIC, Expert Citizens CIC and Staffordshire University that aims to connect people to discuss the issues that create and make poverty worse in Stoke-on-Trent and empower them to act as a collective.

The new project aims to build on the impact that has been made in [Get Talking Hardship \(2019\)](#) and [Raising Voices \(2021\)](#).

To help us take action we will be holding Chat for Change events, across the city. Chat for Change is an opportunity to join other people to talk about poverty in a safe place over a hot drink and a piece of cake.

The Chat for Change events have been developing over the course of the last few months, with members of the community taking part in events and sharing their stories and perspectives.

We are currently looking for community organisations and charities who would like to host a Chat for Change event. If you're interested in hosting one of these events or if you'd like to get involved with the project, please contact:

- **All the Small Things CIC-** allthesmallthingscic@gmail.com
- **Expert Citizens CIC-** volunteer@expertcitizens.org.uk
- **Staffordshire University-** ryan.fox@staffs.ac.uk

Poverty Truth Commission- Facilitators Gathering



Nicola Shaw (Foodbank Stoke), Lynne Ball (All the Small Things CIC) and Ryan Fox (Staffordshire University) attended a 2-day event which brought together people that facilitate Poverty Truth Commissions (PTCs) from across the UK.

It was a great opportunity to learn from each commission and see where they are on their journey. We also heard about the impacts that they have made through their work, both in terms of big policy changes and 'smaller' more personal impacts.

Across the two days, we were able to engage in different workshops and activities to think deeper about how a Poverty Truth Commission could work in Stoke-on-Trent.

Staffordshire University Participatory Action Research Programme



Throughout 2024, the Public Engagement and Research Team have been working with staff and students from across the university to help them do research in participatory ways with communities.

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) Programme equips university staff and students with the skills, techniques and resources to confidently and ethically engage with communities in participatory research projects.

Community Spotlight



[The Connected Communities Newsletter](#) asks for contributions from communities across Staffordshire, to spotlight the work that they do and what they have got coming up that people can get involved with or support.

If you would like to shine a spotlight on your community, email connectedcommunities@staffs.ac.uk