

# Outreach programmes for health improvement of Traveller Communities: a synthesis of evidence

Susan M Carr,<sup>1\*</sup> Monique Lhussier,<sup>1</sup> Natalie Forster,<sup>1</sup> Deborah Goodall,<sup>1</sup> Lesley Geddes,<sup>1</sup> Mark Pennington,<sup>2</sup> Angus Bancroft,<sup>3</sup> Jean Adams<sup>4</sup> and Susan Michie<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

<sup>2</sup>Department of Health Services Research and Policy, London School of Health & Tropical Medicine, London, UK

<sup>3</sup>School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

<sup>4</sup>Institute of Health & Society, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

<sup>5</sup>Division of Psychology and Language Sciences, University College London, London, UK

\*Corresponding author

**Declared competing interests of authors:** Dr Jean Adams has received funding from NIHR Health Technology Assessment, grants from British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Economic and Social Research Council, Medical Research Council and the National Institute for Health Research for research activity during the conduct of this study.

Published July 2014

DOI: 10.3310/phr02030

## Plain English summary

### Outreach programmes for health improvement of Traveller Communities

Public Health Research 2014; Vol. 2: No. 3

DOI: 10.3310/phr02030

NIHR Journals Library [www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk)

## Plain English summary

'Traveller Communities' include a broad variety of groups of nomadic lifestyle or culture. They experience significant health inequalities and, as a result of experiences of discrimination and eviction, may distrust settled people and services.

This research identified and synthesised the evidence on outreach interventions aiming to improve the health of Traveller Communities through (1) a scoping review of the evidence, (2) an economic review of the evidence on the cost-effectiveness of different types of outreach and (3) a realist review, using theory to explain how and in what circumstances outreach works best. Traveller Community members and outreach workers were involved throughout the review in order to refine the findings.

The 278 studies identified described needs, with less focus on interventions.

Little evidence was available for the economic evaluation. Practice nurses can facilitate access, and may be cost-effective. Traveller Community members can deliver cultural awareness training for moderate costs. Mobile clinics have high costs, but may not provide either value for money or an appealing format for Traveller Communities.

The realist synthesis explained that outreach is likely to result in participation, behaviour change or social capital development. The level of trust that the Community has in the outreach worker influences which topics may be successfully addressed and what level of engagement is most likely to result from the intervention. The more trusted the outreach worker is, the less they need to negotiate the intervention topic and vice versa.

Further research is needed to explore the relevance of these findings to other socially excluded groups.

# Public Health Research

ISSN 2050-4381 (Print)

ISSN 2050-439X (Online)

This journal is a member of and subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) ([www.publicationethics.org/](http://www.publicationethics.org/)).

Editorial contact: [nihredit@southampton.ac.uk](mailto:nihredit@southampton.ac.uk)

The full PHR archive is freely available to view online at [www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/phr](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/phr). Print-on-demand copies can be purchased from the report pages of the NIHR Journals Library website: [www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk)

## Criteria for inclusion in the *Public Health Research* journal

Reports are published in *Public Health Research* (PHR) if (1) they have resulted from work for the PHR programme, and (2) they are of a sufficiently high scientific quality as assessed by the reviewers and editors.

Reviews in *Public Health Research* are termed 'systematic' when the account of the search appraisal and synthesis methods (to minimise biases and random errors) would, in theory, permit the replication of the review by others.

## PHR programme

The Public Health Research (PHR) programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), evaluates public health interventions, providing new knowledge on the benefits, costs, acceptability and wider impacts of non-NHS interventions intended to improve the health of the public and reduce inequalities in health. The scope of the programme is multi-disciplinary and broad, covering a range of interventions that improve public health. The Public Health Research programme also complements the NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme which has a growing portfolio evaluating NHS public health interventions.

For more information about the PHR programme please visit the website: [www.phr.nihr.ac.uk/](http://www.phr.nihr.ac.uk/)

## This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the PHR programme as project number 10/3004/02. The contractual start date was in June 2011. The final report began editorial review in October 2013 and was accepted for publication in March 2014. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The PHR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the PHR programme or the Department of Health. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the PHR programme or the Department of Health.

**© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2014. This work was produced by Carr *et al.* under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health. This issue may be freely reproduced for the purposes of private research and study and extracts (or indeed, the full report) may be included in professional journals provided that suitable acknowledgement is made and the reproduction is not associated with any form of advertising. Applications for commercial reproduction should be addressed to: NIHR Journals Library, National Institute for Health Research, Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton SO16 7NS, UK.**

Published by the NIHR Journals Library ([www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk)), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland ([www.prepress-projects.co.uk](http://www.prepress-projects.co.uk)).

## **Public Health Research Editor-in-Chief**

**Professor Catherine Law** Professor of Public Health and Epidemiology, Unit Head, Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UCL Institute of Child Health, UK

## **NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief**

**Professor Tom Walley** Director, NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies and Director of the HTA Programme, UK

## **NIHR Journals Library Editors**

**Professor Ken Stein** Chair of HTA Editorial Board and Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

**Professor Andree Le May** Chair of NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group (EME, HS&DR, PGfAR, PHR journals)

**Dr Martin Ashton-Key** Consultant in Public Health Medicine/Consultant Advisor, NETSCC, UK

**Professor Matthias Beck** Chair in Public Sector Management and Subject Leader (Management Group), Queen's University Management School, Queen's University Belfast, UK

**Professor Aileen Clarke** Professor of Public Health and Health Services Research, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

**Dr Tessa Crilly** Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

**Dr Peter Davidson** Director of NETSCC, HTA, UK

**Ms Tara Lamont** Scientific Advisor, NETSCC, UK

**Professor Elaine McColl** Director, Newcastle Clinical Trials Unit, Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle University, UK

**Professor William McGuire** Professor of Child Health, Hull York Medical School, University of York, UK

**Professor Geoffrey Meads** Professor of Health Sciences Research, Faculty of Education, University of Winchester, UK

**Professor Jane Norman** Professor of Maternal and Fetal Health, University of Edinburgh, UK

**Professor John Powell** Consultant Clinical Adviser, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), UK

**Professor James Raftery** Professor of Health Technology Assessment, Wessex Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK

**Dr Rob Riemsma** Reviews Manager, Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd, UK

**Professor Helen Roberts** Professor of Child Health Research, University College London, UK

**Professor Helen Snooks** Professor of Health Services Research, Institute of Life Science, College of Medicine, Swansea University, UK

Please visit the website for a list of members of the NIHR Journals Library Board:  
[www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors)

**Editorial contact:** [nihredit@southampton.ac.uk](mailto:nihredit@southampton.ac.uk)