

Summary

Coproduction in disability research: developing future strategies

About the DRILL Programme

DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) was an innovative 5 year, UK wide programme led by disabled people, for disabled people and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Launched in 2015, the programme was managed by a partnership of Disability Action Northern Ireland, Disability Rights UK, Disability Wales and Inclusion Scotland.

The aim of the programme was to build better evidence about approaches which enable disabled people to achieve independent living. The findings from the projects it funded can be used to inform future provision across a wide range of policy areas, and give a greater voice to disabled people in decisions which affect them.

This is one of a series of summaries of the project supported by DRILL. Final reports, toolkits and summaries of all the projects are available from the DRILL website at www.drilluk.org.uk.

Overview of this project on peer researchers

This project explored the benefits and challenges associated with working with peer researchers.

It builds on the findings of other DRILL funded projects, analysing the barriers and possible solutions to working with peer researchers.

Approach

The project used qualitative research methods. It conducted focus groups and individual interviews with six of the other DRILL projects, including at least one from each nation.

A Community of Inquiry session was held, which is a 10-step approach to generating questions and facilitating discussion in response to a series of questions.

Findings

Peer researchers are defined, in this project, as disabled people with previous experience of research and disabled people with no prior research experience, who have been recruited and trained specifically to co-produce DRILL funded research projects.

Mostly, peer researchers were involved in all aspects of the research process. The inclusion of peer researchers during the funding application was particularly limited as the teams often did not have the funds to do this.

This lack of involvement of disabled people at the start of the project can lead to peer researchers feeling that their research project was not truly co-produced.

Some peer researchers note that, as a result of their research work, they developed a better understanding of their own health conditions. They also gained a greater awareness of the lives of other people with the same condition.

The phrase 'peer researcher' received mixed reviews, it is easily understandable to funding bodies, disabled people and policy makers. However, it could enforce the existing unequal hierarchies between academic researchers and those with lived experience.

Peer researchers play an important role in recruitment, fieldwork and research dissemination in disability studies.

Participation in coproduced research improves peer researchers' wellbeing, raises confidence levels, extends networks and broadens future aims.

Findings (continued)

Arranging payment for peer researchers who receive welfare benefits presents a barrier for successful research coproduction.

Peer researchers often helped to produce information sheets in plain English, which increased recruitment for research studies by making the documents much more accessible.

Recommendations

The project outlined many recommendations, some of which are listed here. All recommendations are included in the full report, which is linked below.

- The term ‘coproduction’ must be defined so that a mutual understanding of the role of peer researchers can be understood by all
- There must be sustainable access to funding and practical support to continue to build a capacity to lead on disability research projects
- Seed corn funding, where money is available at the beginning of a project, would enable peer researchers to be involved at the application for funding stage of a project
- Funding bodies should make coproduction an essential requirement for all disability research projects
- A culture where peer researchers have equal roles within research projects, and their involvement not being tokenistic, must be created
- A review of policies and practices, particularly those within universities, would ensure that requirements can be met, and disabled people can be involved in research projects.

Final report

[Coproduction in disability research: developing future strategies](#)

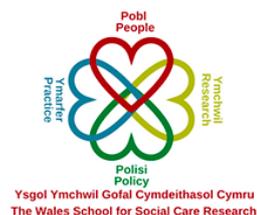
Please click on report name to read the full report.

Project partners

Disability Wales



Wales School for Social Care Research



Swansea University



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