



Trans Learning Partnership

Research participant feedback

Introduction

45 community researchers and research participants attended 5 research activities as part of the TLP Employment, Housing and Assets community participatory action research projects. They were asked to provide anonymous feedback about their experiences of the research training and research events. 33% of attendees provided feedback, with responses from people who attended each research event. The roles of respondents and events they attended can be seen in Table 1 (a and b).

Table 1 a) Roles of respondents and b) the events they attended.

Community Researchers	4
Research participants	7
Both roles	4

London	Housing	5
	Assets	3
Manchester Assets		5
Glasgow Assets		2

The survey focused on the effectiveness of the research training, the impact that the research events had on the attendees' wider lives, how included participants felt at the events, and any improvements that could be made in future.

Results

Research Training

A mixture of online and in-person training was undertaken by the researchers. This training included research ethics, facilitation techniques, and specific skills surrounding interview and focus group schedule development. All training included an element of co-production through which the community researchers contributed to and shaped the design of the research.

The researchers were asked about their experiences of the research training they received. All researchers said that it made them feel more confident to conduct research both within this project and in other research projects.

"The event has helped me to think about my future goals in research. It encouraged me to begin volunteering with a local archive on a research project - I didn't have as much confidence in my skills before!"

All researchers also said that it increased their understanding of developing research projects and that they will use the skills learnt in other aspects of their lives. 100% of respondents that attended focus group training said it increased their understanding of developing focus group schedules. 87% of

¹ Report prepared by the TLP Data Coordinator in October 2023

Event attendees were asked to share anything more about how the events were for them. They discussed finding them interesting and well hosted, and that they found power in having structured discussions with other trans people. Over half of respondents specifically positively commented on the consideration given to making the events accessible and inclusive:

“The event was amazing, everything was thought through according to people's needs, and all the staff and participants were awesome to work with”.

“Great to have plenty of food, and the venue was accessible”.

“Amazing access and communication from the team”.

“Whatever I needed felt very easily accepted and that was wonderful”.

Advanced communication and having fidget toys were specifically mentioned as being very beneficial to the overall experience of the events.

Two respondents mentioned ways that they could have been further included:

“I would have appreciated more clear communication about when breaks were going to be. Because I was sitting outside, I didn't know that it was lunch time at first, and I didn't get many other chances for a break.”

“I think I struggled a bit with being distracted on the day but that is possibly a personal thing and not just the acoustics!”

Respondents were asked how important each of the accessibility measures put in place were in helping or encouraging them to be involved in the research, with responses displayed in Figure 2.

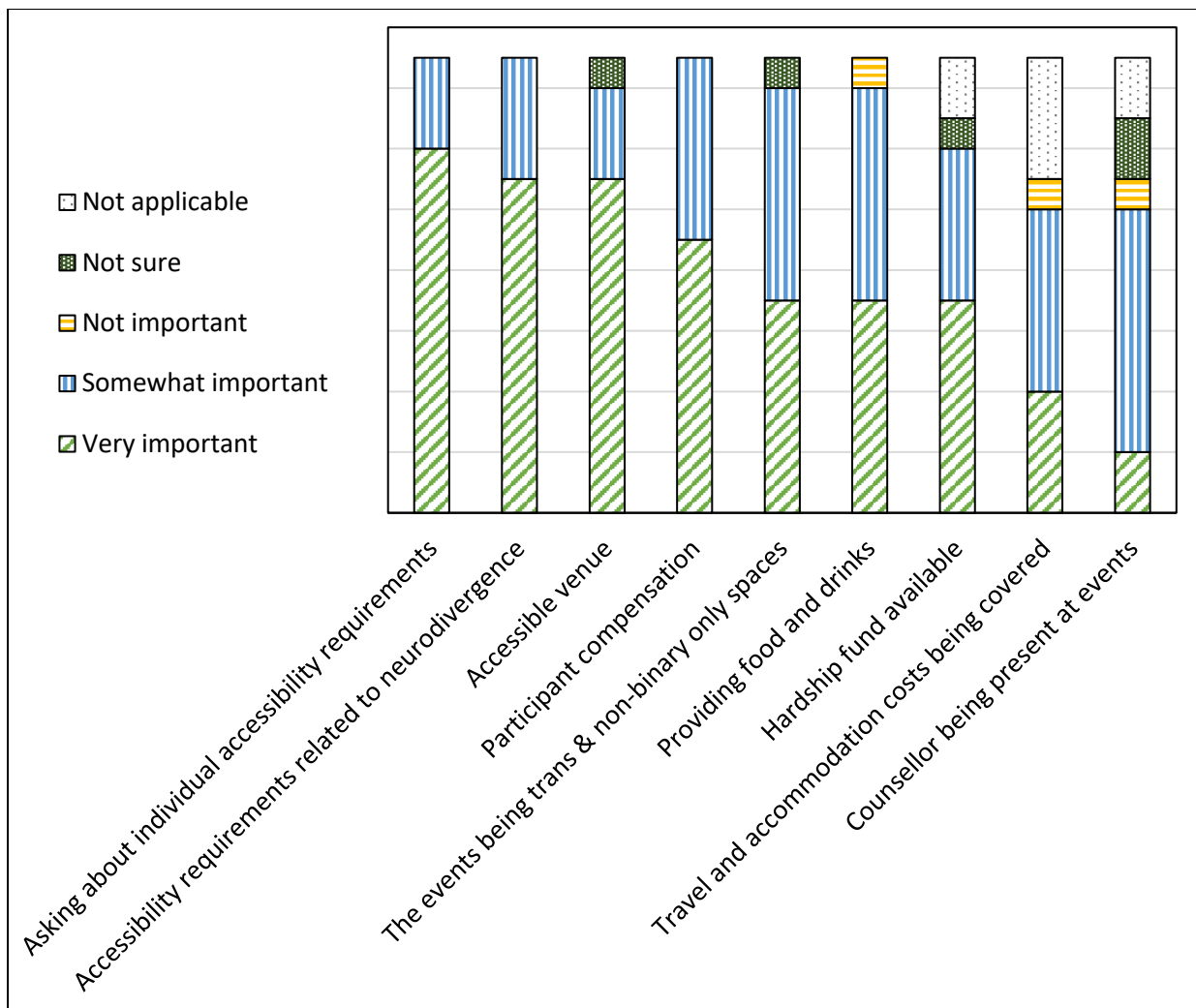



Figure 2 How important the accessibility measures were in helping or encouraging community members to be involved in TLP research.

The importance of each measure was ranked from most to least important, depending upon attendee response.

Most important

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1. Asking about individual accessibility requirements.
 2. Accessibility requirements related to neurodivergence being considered.
 3. Accessible venue
 4. Participant compensation
 5. The events being trans & non-binary only spaces.
 6. Providing food and drinks
 7. Hardship fund available
 8. Travel and accommodation costs being covered.
 9. Counsellor being present at events.

Least important

Finally, participants highlighted that there was an under representation of transfeminine people and trans women, trans people of colour, and working-class trans people within the research participant cohort. This was seen to have an impact on the data collected on the day.

“More research participants from a greater diversity of experiences would have helped the research - I know that we had trouble finding someone to speak about experience of council housing.”

“[It] would be nice to see more people from different backgrounds and ethnicities.”

Discussion

The training provided community researchers with the confidence and skills required to undertake the research activities and increased attendees’ confidence in their skills in other aspect of their lives. The coproduction elements enabled the researchers to take ownership of the research process and adapt it to their learning and working styles. The training methods used were appropriate and successful for the project and all community researchers were upskilled and increased in confidence through involvement in the project.

Feedback from research participants was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of participants saying that being involved in this research has made them more likely to be involved in other research. As trans populations are over-surveyed, often express a feeling of powerlessness to change anti-trans or uninformed narratives in media and research, and present with a lack of trust in research systems, this is a very positive project outcome. A further positive outcome is the increased connection to their community, which 93% of respondents reported that they felt.

Whilst 93% of the participants explicitly enjoyed being involved in the research, 7% were neutral on this and 26% of participants were unsure or neutral about feeling empowered through being involved. Of these, elements of the feedback survey allowed them to indicate that they would have felt more

empowered and enjoyed the experience more if the community researchers were guided to stick to their chosen roles more when delivering focus groups (where there was more than one researcher delivering each focus group). In future events this could be improved by the experienced research facilitators discussing the importance of working as a team and giving space for the other researchers in the team to have their input. Additionally, having an allotted break mid-way through the focus group would allow the researchers to have a discussion about how they are feeling and to be supported by the experienced facilitators to readjust any mismatched dynamics.

The word cloud in Figure 1 can be used to paint a picture of the event experience for attendees. The most frequently used words indicate that the events were both educational and enjoyable and that attendees found them beneficial from a skills development angle, as well as specifically in relation to their experiences as trans people which they felt were affirmed through the research process. In the context of the research recruitment methods, which meant that very few of the attendees knew each other before attending the events, the aspects of being enlightening and thought-provoking could be related to the experience of engaging in structured discussion with trans community members outside of their usual circles or conversation topics.

All the accessibility measures put in place were seen as highly important, with only 'providing food and drinks', 'travel and accommodation costs being covered' and 'counsellor being present at events' being deemed 'not important' by any respondent. This indicates that all measures should be maintained at future events. Despite this, there was slight difference in the reported importance enabling them to be roughly ranked from most to least important.

The most important accessibility measures put in place was asking about individual accessibility requirements and considering accessibility requirements related to neurodivergence. These were seen as very or somewhat important by all respondents. They ensured attendees' needs were met and that a culture of inclusion was fostered from the outset. This supported the attendees to engage in a way that made them feel comfortable and share needs they had throughout the process.

The events being exclusively trans and non-binary spaces was seen as the 5th most important measure, with 93% of respondents saying it was 'very' or 'somewhat' important and 7% being not sure. Anecdotal feedback at the events however discussed the feeling of freedom created through having only trans and non-binary people present, and that attendees felt it was a rare occurrence when taking part or working in research.

The counsellor being present at events was seen to be the least important accessibility measure. However, only one respondent indicated that the counsellor was not important, and one participant from the London Housing event where the counsellor was not present commented

"I understand that the counsellor was not able to make it for the event I attended - but I think that it is a really good idea to have someone on hand to unpack the emotional nature of the discussions."

The comments from participants on how they could be further included demonstrate that not all accessibility needs were met at the events. Facilitators having clear responsibilities when it comes to announcements on the day would ensure that all attendees knew when the breaks were.

None of the venues had been visited before the research events by the facilitators and so the acoustics and exact layouts of the venues and features such as the lighting and acoustics were not known in detail. The TLP staff team are located across the country and the events were generally not local to them, making it impractical and costly to visit the research venues prior to the events. For future

events, where visiting the venues is not possible, it may be beneficial to ask for photos, a video tour, and/or a floorplan and pass these on to event attendees.

The underrepresentation of transfeminine people and trans women, trans people of colour, and working-class trans people at the research events was raised during the debrief at all events. This was seen to be the largest gap in accessibility with documented impact on the data acquired. Numerous factors, such as structural discrimination, a lack of trust, research fatigue, lack of capacity as a result of further marginalisation, under promotion to these groups, and the way the research projects were discussed and written about may have contributed to this. The TLP specifically promoted the research opportunities to TPOC and trans women/transfeminine communities, however the techniques used were insufficient. The TLP must take further steps to reduce the underrepresentation of these groups, though actively challenging structural transmisogyny, racism, and classism within our organisation and working practice. An action plan must be developed which includes how the TLP will engage with existing community groups, develop targeted recruitment strategies, and pro-actively learn from this experience. Building upon existing relationships with participants from the Employment, Housing and Assets research projects will be included within this plan.

Conclusions

- Feedback from community researchers and research participants was overwhelmingly positive
- The research training styles was successful and appropriate and should be used in future projects where required.
- In future training an emphasis should be placed on the importance of leaving space for the other researchers to speak, and/or a break should be held midway through each focus group to allow time to regroup.
- All respondents were upskilled by taking part in the project.
- The quality of the data gathered was improved through ensuring accessibility requirement of the researchers were met, with co-production of the research schedule key to this.
- At future events consideration must be made around the budgetary impact of having a counsellor present vs the benefit to attendees.
- Where possible, venues should be visited prior to the event to understand the layout and accessibility features.
- Further work must be done to include transfeminine people and trans women, trans People of Colour, and working-class trans people. This includes:
 - Structurally through personnel and working practice
 - During recruitment of community members
 - Through building partnerships with existing groups and previous participants
- Whilst not mentioned within this feedback, the TLP additionally identified that the reimbursement process must be streamlined, including participants' details being obtained prior to the research events and accurate timelines for payment being provided.