

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Mental health and psychological resilience in Leicester City: a focus on the COVID-19 pandemic and rehabilitation phase

On 11th March 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK has experienced one of the highest recorded death tolls from Covid19 in Europe. This has caused significant community anxiety especially amongst at-risk populations, i.e. the elderly, black and minority ethnic groups, those with underlying health conditions, socially disadvantaged communities and health carers. The ten-week pandemic lockdown, along with enforced shielding and social distancing protocols (with the later continuing indefinitely post pandemic), will have impacted upon community resilience. It is, therefore, essential to obtain a more in-depth insight into how communities are coping with this new psychosocial complexity. This is an important community enquiry, because prior to the pandemic, Leicester City Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (2018-2023), recognised that loneliness had negative consequences on community physical and mental health.

In this project, DMU staff will work in partnership with Leicester City Public Health Practitioners (PHP) to develop a new form of focus group (FG) enquiry and community engagement approach (considering social distancing regulations). The FG will aim to give further insight into the wellbeing of at-risk communities and inform post Covid19 pandemic rehabilitation phase. The PHPs will recruit twelve community facilitators to be trained and support community engagement activities.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES (max 200 words):**

The objectives are:

- To provide in-depth qualitative information from at-risk communities about their resilience and coping strategies during and rehabilitation phase of the Covid19 pandemic.

The objectives are:

- To work in partnership with Leicester City public health practitioners (who attended the DMU 19/20 training) and provide expert advice to practitioners to engage in community engagement activities that consider new safer ways of engaging with communities post Covid19.
- To work in partnership with Leicester City public health practitioners to develop an evidence-based report detailing a community's mental health needs and their response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Submitted by:**

- Professor Bertha Ochieng (DMU)
- Liz Rodrigo (Leicester City Council)