

# HSC R&D Division Final Report

## ***PPI in Research Small Grant Scheme***

***Updated March 2026***

*Reports should be submitted via electronic copy to HSC R&D Division within 6 weeks of the request. The report should be completed on the attached form in Arial 11. Please extend boxes as required. Please adhere to any word limits. These reports may be subject to external peer review. Details from the Report may be placed on the HSC R&D Division website and shared with appropriate key stakeholders or members of the public.*

## HSC R&D Division Award Details

<b>HSC R&amp;D File Reference</b>	STL/5562/19
<b>HSC R&amp;D Funding Scheme</b>	PPI in Research Support: Small Grant Scheme
<b>Project Title</b>	Women's Voices Shaping A Women's Health Strategy for Northern Ireland
<b>Award Holder Name (Employer)</b>	Rhonda Murphy (Derry Well Women)
<b>Host Organisation</b>	Derry Well Women
<b>Award Duration</b>	
<b>Award Start Date</b>	30.08.24
<b>Award End Date</b>	31.07.25

## Signature

**Award Holder Signature:**

R J Murphy

**Date:** 13.04.2026

# Evidence Brief for PPI in Research Small Grant Scheme

*(2 pages: which may be used for dissemination by HSC R&D Division)*

## Why did we start?

(The purpose and need for the PPI initiative)

It is recognised globally that a strategic approach to women’s health is needed to address gender related inequalities in health and access to health care. For some women the experience of disadvantage, prejudice and violence across the life course is commonplace. So too are their negative health impacts on not only women but also their families and wider communities. An appreciation of the socio-economic context of women’s lives is crucial to comprehensive and effective planning for women’s health. The most effective way to gather and shape this context in a local setting is to listen to and be guided by the voices of local women – a Women’s Health Listening Exercise (WHLE) To that end this initiative would ensure that women’s voices shape a Health Strategy for women for NI by ensuring that ordinary local women shape how we listen and gather the evidence on which the strategy will be based.

## What did we do?

(Please comment on how the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#) guided your plans and what you did)

We completed the WHLE to include online survey and focus groups and agreed with our Stakeholder group that we needed to take stock of the process to date - feedback on our findings before we presented our report to DoH to ensure our fundings resonated with women and opportunities to be involved at the next stage of a Women’s Health Action Plan being produced and put forward the recommendations for this. This Engagement Event took place on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 in The Europa Hotel and service users were part of this planning and design to ensure PPI was at the heart from the very start.

The cost of hosting this event for 100 women cost £4470. This covered the venue, morning tea and scones and hospitality (to include hot fork buffet lunch). Transport costs were £ 23 and these were reimbursed to service users within 24 hrs.

The venue, the hospitality and the welcome all ensured that women who attended felt valued and their voice was important.

This grant of £2500 was used to support this event.

We were guided with standards below:

**Working Together:** Women as service users form part of our co-design from the start and part of our Stakeholder Group

**Communications:** Women who had been involved in our focus groups and women from excluded groups and communities received a personal email to attend the event. Women were kept in touch with throughout the process and will continue to be until Action Plan is in place

**Inclusive Opportunities:** We facilitated 11 focus groups to women from marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds such as women at risk of homelessness, women carers, women with disabilities, rural women and women travellers. These women were all invited to our Event and we had excellent representation with 4 women travelling from Lisnaskea to attend

**Impact:** An engagement event which had a cap of 70 which we had to increase to 100 due to demand. 99 women attended on the day. Evaluations following the event were extremely positive

**Governance:** We were guided by our Stakeholder group which was made up of those working in the women’s sector and women with lived experience

**Support & Learning:** As we partnered with QUB for this project, ethics approval was sought and followed as part of our support to women throughout this process. Learning was a continual process for us and for the women who participated.

**What did we achieve?**

(Please describe any outputs and the short and longer-term impacts of this initiative)

**Our Output:**

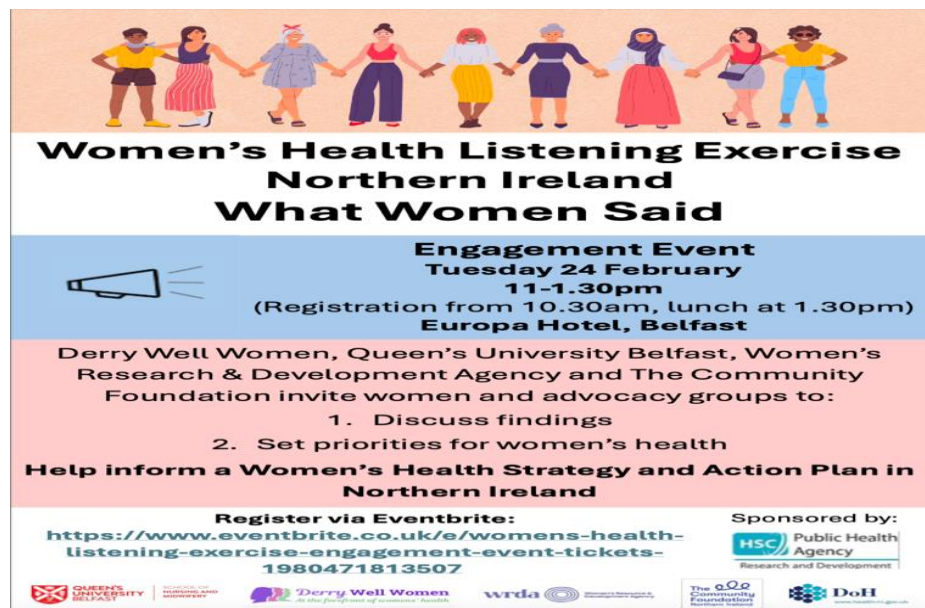
Our overall output was our Engagement Event (as below invite) which brought 99 women together to update them on the Listening Exercise Findings to date, ensure our findings resonated with current needs of local women and gather their views further on our next steps as we move to support the drafting of a Women’s Health Action Plan for NI.

**Short term impacts:**

Empowerment for those women service users who were involved in planning for the event and ensuring their lived experience and co-design was central  
 Empowerment for women who attended the event - to be involved in process to date and feel part of an important move for women’s health in NI  
 Women feeling supported by women during the event and leaving feeling motivated, enthused, inspired and hopeful that they have been part of a co-design process and a better health plan for women in the future  
 Women learning from other women at the event and feeling motivated to continue with next stage of co-design process

**Longer term impacts:**

Women who attended the event and involved in the co-design process have went on to become women’s health advocates for other events (e.g. lived experience speaker at WHSCT Integrated Hub event, representative at Breast Cancer Regional Review, DoH representative as PPI)  
 Women who attended have nominated themselves to be part of stakeholder group to support the drafting of the Women’s Health Action Plan  
 Ultimately our best longer term impact from the WHLE which led to this successful engagement event will be the development of a Women’s Health Action Plan for NI and future Women’s Health Strategy for NI which has been as a result of listening to women and ensuring they have been part of the process from start to finish.



## Evidence Brief

(2 page: which may be used for dissemination by HSC R&D Division)

### What should be done now?

(Practice/Policy Implications and/or Recommendations for PPI in HSC Research)

#### **Policy Recommendations:**

As a result of our WHLE for NI and the Engagement Event which this grant supported, a Women's Health Action plan for NI will be published by the end of this year (as advised by DoH). This Action Plan will be drafted with the views and lived experiences of women throughout their life course. This will include the voices of women from marginalised, disadvantaged and more excluded groups and it will include women's voices from all ages and areas of NI. We have requested that DoH continue to include women as stakeholders to support as this plan is drafted and finalised to ensure this co-design ends as it started

What needs to be done after this Women's Health Action Plan is a Women's Health Strategy for NI. This also needs to ensure that women have been at the core of planning and design and what we have learnt from review of the Plan is taken into consideration.

We are keen that women's health advocacy doesn't end once the Women's Health Plan is complete but that women continue to have a voice in their health care.

What do you feel has been the **most significant impact** of being awarded the PPI in Research Small Grant?



Whilst it may be argued that the greatest impact of the award will be the future development of a Women's Health Action Plan and Strategy for NI we feel the most significant impact of this award is demonstrated in the photos above which were taken during the event. These photos clearly demonstrate the direct involvement of women in the process and the power of PPI when it is done in an inclusive, co-designed and supportive way acknowledging that better care and treatment comes from listening to those who know best. Having women to advocate for their own health needs and empowering those women who often feel excluded or don't have their voice heard has been the most significant aspect of this award.

Some quotes from women following the event summarise this perfectly:

*"Thank you for putting on such a wonderful morning which has given me so much inspiration that when women get together great things can happen. Being part of the room today and feeling confident to share my story has been so uplifting"*

*"So powerful to hear everyone's story and have this as part of a better plan for women – particularly for our younger women behind us"*

*"I felt so valued today and that my opinion matters. I wasn't going to attend and so glad that I did. I am keen to be involved in the next stage thank you"*

Do you have any **'lessons learned'** from your PPI experiences during your award that would serve as useful learning for others in the future?

**Lessons Learned:**

- Having lived experience from the outset (planning and development stage) right through until the end of the project is key – and ensuring that there is an accountability loop and for us, that women felt they were fully part of the process and not just 'brought in' as needed
- Ensuring service users whose voices are often not heard are encouraged as much as possible. Through the process of the WHLE we did this will targeted focus groups and with the event we made sure we had a venue as accessible as possible and paid for transport costs of childcare costs as needed
- We linked in with each women individually in advance of our event. They received a personal email invite and we made a point of welcoming them by name as they came in. We made a conscious effort to set a welcoming environment and ensure women felt valued. This ensured that women felt comfortable to open up and speak freely.