

# **PPI in Research Small Grant Scheme**

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*Guidance Notes for PPI in  
Research Small Grant  
Scheme*

Updated March 2026

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Local and national policy increasingly emphasises the central role of patients, service users, carers and the wider public in shaping Health and Social Care (HSC). Organisations now have a statutory duty to involve users and the public in the commissioning, planning and delivery of all HSC services.
- 1.2 The strategic need for and benefits of [Personal and Public Involvement \(PPI\)](#) apply to all levels of HSC Research and Development Division (HSC R&D Division) activity, and the wider HSC research community within Northern Ireland (NI).
- 1.3 HSC R&D Division believes that research and its dissemination are strengthened through the appropriate involvement of patients, service users, carers, and the wider public (PPI). However, we recognise that resources may be required to facilitate the involvement of people in the research process as partners rather than participants.
- 1.4 This scheme aims to provide support for people working in HSC research to access resources (e.g. funds, time, skills) to help them implement/develop PPI in their own projects or programmes, or to enable PPI contributors already involved in HSC research projects or programmes to apply for courses or workshops which may help to develop them in their involvement role.
- 1.5 It aims to support and encourage innovative practice in the delivery of PPI through the development of new ways of working, in particular groups who are underserved by research.

## **2 Eligibility**

- 2.1 This scheme is open to researchers, health professionals or PPI contributors working in the field of HSC Research in Northern Ireland.
- 2.2 It is intended to support applications from HSC organisations and Universities, and other HEIs or voluntary/not-for-profit organisations in Northern Ireland involved in health and/or social care research.
- 2.3 The application must be able to demonstrate the benefit that the PPI initiative will have for the HSC, provide a clear description of the research context, and evidence that the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#) have guided plans for the proposed initiative.
- 2.4 Applications should clearly demonstrate a link to the development of future external research grants or other awards/initiatives that will bring benefits to Northern Ireland.
- 2.5 Applicants can only apply a maximum of two times in any 12-month period.

## 3 Scope

### 3.1 Awards may provide a contribution towards:

- The establishment of a PPI panel/advisory group for a specific research project or programme, including costs for venue/travel/subsistence and where appropriate, thank-you payments/honorarium in recognition of their time, skills and expertise<sup>1</sup>.
- The development/use of innovative methods e.g. technology/art/social media or other mechanisms to promote/encourage/facilitate involvement of PPI contributors in the research process or within a particular research area/programme.
- Conference/course/workshop attendance to cover fees, travel, accommodation, and/or subsistence for PPI contributors already involved in HSC research through a specific programme or project. Applications must be made in conjunction with a Principal Investigator. Funding for the development of training or courses will only be considered where a clear pathway to sustainable delivery has been demonstrated.

### 3.2 Please note that Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) is not the same as engagement which is where research and people connect and share information, for example, through open days or dissemination events.

### 3.3 This scheme will not support:

- Research engagement activities in isolation.
- Courses/training for PPI contributors with a sole focus on research methods.
- PPI activities within curriculum development.
- PPI activities within Health and Social Care service delivery, including policy or strategy development.
- PPI activities related to undergraduate/postgraduate awards
- Costs to cover HSC or academic staff time.

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<sup>1</sup> For guidance on payment rates see: [Payment guidance for researchers and professionals | NIHR](#). For a budget calculator example see: [Budgeting for involvement: cost calculator - Learning for Involvement](#)

#### 3.4 Applications for support:

- should not normally exceed **£2,500** if support for the development of PPI panel/advisory group or development/use of innovative methods to promote/encourage/facilitate involvement of PPI contributors, is requested
- should not normally exceed **£1500** if support for conference/workshop/training event attendance is requested
- should ensure all costs are justified and kept to a minimum
- not extend beyond 18 months
- should clearly identify who will lead on delivery of the initiative and the support of PPI contributors involved.

3.5 Where appropriate, PPI contributors should be involved in the development of applications (either from established groups or via [HSC R&D Division's PIER \(NI\) group](#)). This is particularly important for developing the justification or need for the proposed initiative (Q2a).

3.6 HSC R&D Division is accountable for all its funding decisions and reserves the right to refuse funding for any costs that are, in its view, inappropriate and/or excessive.

## **4 Application Process**

4.1 Applications to the scheme can be made throughout the year but the scheme will be suspended if/when the annual budget is spent.

4.2 Applications for this scheme must be made only by the lead applicant and must be submitted on the proper application form.

4.3 Application forms are available from HSC R&D Division website: <http://www.research.hscni.net>. It is highly recommended that potential applicants contact Dr Janet Diffin (Senior R&D Programme Manager, HSC R&D Division) in advance of an application to determine eligibility ([Janet.Diffin@hscni.net](mailto:Janet.Diffin@hscni.net)). A list of helpful PPI resources can also be found [here](#).

4.4. E-mailed applications are accepted. The application form should be saved as a pdf file and submitted by e-mail to [Kathleen.Roulston@hscni.net](mailto:Kathleen.Roulston@hscni.net). The signatories who have e-signed the application declaration page must be cc'd into the submission email.

4.5 Forms should be completed in Arial 11.

4.6 Applicants are asked to note the following instructions:

*Question 2 Synopsis of proposed initiative*

- Provide the title of the initiative and the start and end dates.
- Please indicate if you have applied to this scheme in the previous 12 months and if so, provide the title.
- Provide a detailed justification for why this initiative is needed. This should include the detail any involvement of PPI groups or contributors to date in the determination of the need for and type of PPI initiative described in the application.
- Provide details of the patients, service users, carers and or public that you intend to involve in this initiative. Who will you involve, how many people do you plan to involve, and how you'll identify them. Outline how you'll engage, support, reward, and provide feedback to those involved.
- Describe how the initiative will be developed and delivered. Please include how you plan to manage and coordinate this activity, showing how this is proportionate to your budget and resources.
- Describe a clear output from the initiative and how such outputs will be disseminated e.g. a case study reflecting on involvement with a particular topic or group; a tool to facilitate involvement with a specific community; establishment of a public panel; social media campaign
- Describe the intended short and longer-term impacts of the initiative and how you will identify if it has been successful.

*Question 3 Benefits to HSC Research in Northern Ireland*

- Describe how the initiative will benefit Health and Social Care research within Northern Ireland.

*Question 4 Justification for Support*

- Provide a detailed breakdown of the total support requested and a clear justification for the requested funding. This should include clarity on the number of PPI contributors involved in the initiative and accurate costing of all PPI activities<sup>2</sup>. Also include other sources of support including the value of that support.
- If travel & accommodation costs are included, travel should be at economy rates and a maximum of £200 daily rate will be considered for accommodation/subsistence. Please note we do not cover consultant or speaker fees/honorarium.

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<sup>2</sup> [Payment guidance for researchers and professionals | NIHR](#)

- If the application involves the hosting on an event or workshop, where possible, this should take place in a non-commercial venue in Northern Ireland. Applications related to events taking place in commercial venues (hotels and private conference facilities) may be considered, however if HSC R&D Division is being requested to pay costs directly associated with the commercial venue, then a full justification for this must be provided within the application.

## **5 Evaluation and Notification**

5.1 Funding awarded under the PPI in Research Small Grant Scheme will be made at the discretion of HSC R&D Division. This decision will involve a judgement on the individual and financial circumstances of a particular initiative together with the perceived benefits to the HSC and to HSC R&D Division.

5.2 HSC R&D Division will consider the following:

- whether the initiative fits within the scope of this fund and the need is clearly identified and justified
- how well applicants have considered the UK Standards for Public Involvement when planning for how to involve and support people who get involved
- whether the initiative can realistically be delivered within the proposed budget and time-line
- the potential outputs and short and longer-term impacts of the initiative on the research project/programme, and how it will be evaluated
- the wider benefits that the initiative will bring to HSC research in NI
- whether the requested costs are appropriate and justified.

5.3 The applicant will be notified of the outcome of their application by HSC R&D Division by email, to the email address specified on the application form.

## **6 Successful Applicants**

- 6.1 Awards must be accepted by an appropriate designated Host Organisation which will manage the award on behalf of HSC R&D Division. HSC R&D Division will make appropriate arrangements with the relevant organisation(s) for claiming the Award.
- 6.2 The scope of financial support is detailed in section three. Invoices must be administered by an appropriate designated organisation, and a breakdown of costs should be provided.
- 6.3 All awards made under this scheme will be subject to HSC R&D Terms and Conditions: <https://research.hscni.net/terms-and-conditions-awards>
- 6.4 The support of HSC R&D Division must be acknowledged on any relevant documentation and outputs. For more information please refer to our guidance: <http://www.research.hscni.net/acknowledging-hsc-rd-division>.
- 6.5 All Award Holders will be required to submit a final report describing outcomes of their project. A final statement of expenditure will also be requested at project close. For further information see: <https://research.hscni.net/reporting-requirements-award-holders>.