HSC Public Health Agency

Research and Development

Monitoring and Reporting Personal and Public Involvement (PPI): Guidance for HSC R&D Awardees

July 2026

A key priority of the Involvement Matters project was to:

Strengthen the monitoring and reporting requirements set by funders of Health and Social Care research to ensure Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) plans are being delivered on effectively.

The purpose of this document is to describe HSC R&D Division's expectations for the reporting and monitoring of PPI within all funding awards, and to signpost to useful resources to support awardees.

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1. Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) in Health and Social Care Research

1.1 Terminology

Across the United Kingdom and Ireland, different terms are used to describe public involvement in Health and Social Care research. In much of the UK, the term Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) is now used, whilst in Ireland, Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) is used.

However, in Northern Ireland, we tend to use the term Personal and Public Involvement (PPI). This term was first introduced in 2007 to describe the concept of involving people and local communities in the planning, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of the Health and Social care services they receive[1]. The use of 'Personal' recognises the integration of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland, and the contributions of people with lived experience beyond those who identify as patients, including carers, family members, and the wider public.

In Health and Social Care research, Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) means research that is carried out with or by members of the public, rather than to, for, or about them. It involves an active partnership between patients, carers, service users, members of the public and researchers. The term 'public contributors' is often used when referring to individuals working in partnership with researchers to shape, deliver, analyse, and share research findings.

PPI is about working together and influencing decisions throughout the research process, and has been shown to improve research quality, impact, and outcomes for patients. Excellent involvement is inclusive, values all contributions, and ensures people have a meaningful influence.

As one of the original signatories to the Shared Commitment to Public Involvement, HSC R&D Division fully endorse the following: '*PPI is important, expected and*

[1] https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/personal-and-public-involvement-ppi

possible in all types of Health and Social Care research'. For this reason, the inclusion of PPI is a mandatory requirement within the HSC R&D funded research. HSC R&D Division also support and actively promote the UK Standards for Public Involvement, and expect that the standards will be considered when planning, monitoring and reporting PPI activities.

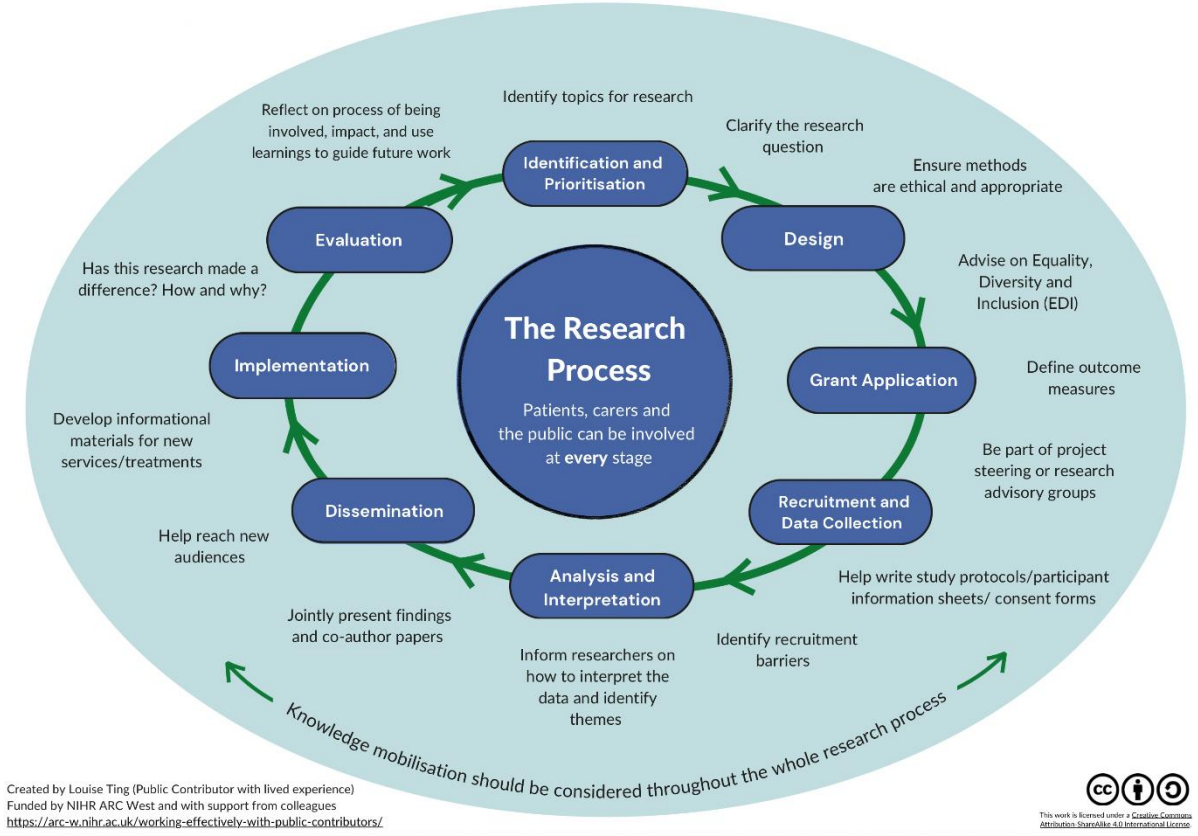


Figure 1: The research process and how PPI can be embedded in it at each stage[2]

[2] Diagram - how PPI can be embedded in the research process - ARC West

1.2 Distinguishing between PPI, engagement and participation

For the purposes of monitoring and reporting on PPI, it is important to note that PPI is not the same as:

Engagement: by engagement, we mean where research and people connect and share information, for example, through open days, presentations to the public on research findings, or sharing a blog on social media.

Or

Participation: where people take part in a study as participants, for example, completing a survey, being part of a clinical trial, taking part in interviews or focus groups for the purposes of data collection (qualitative research).

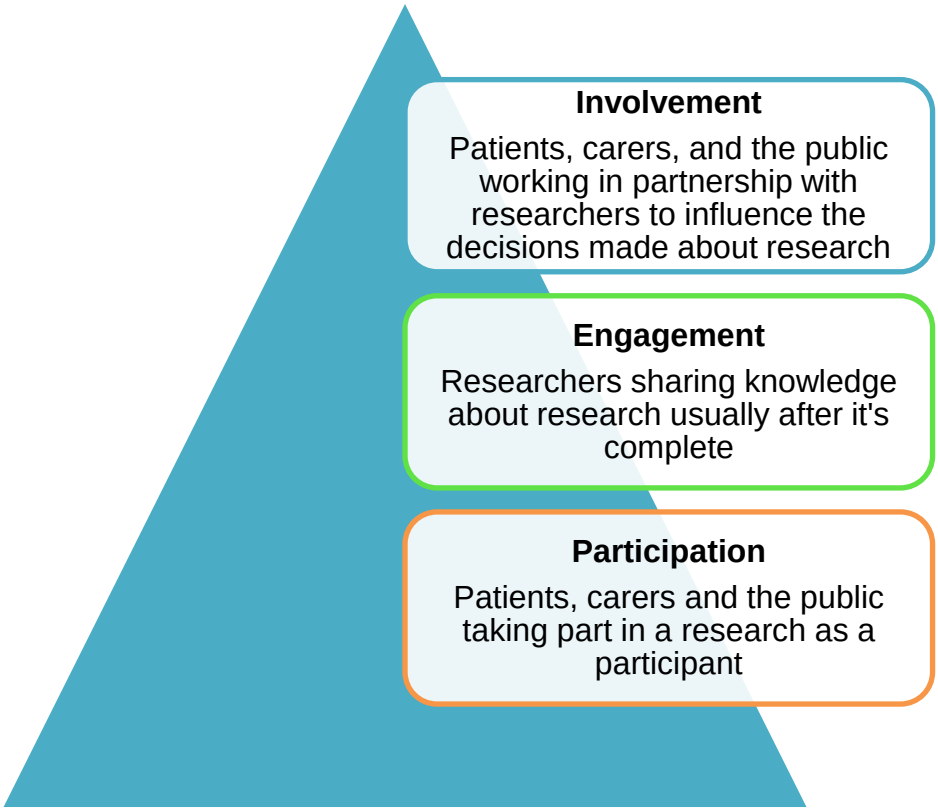


Figure 2: Overview of the distinction between participation, engagement and involvement in Health and Social Care research

2. Guidance on PPI reporting and monitoring

2.1 Expectations of HSC R&D Division

The question used within the majority of HSC R&D Division's reporting templates is:

Update your progress in implementing Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) within the stage(s) of the research cycle that this reporting period falls. Please describe any impacts this has had on your research project and where possible, reference the relevant UK Standard for Public Involvement.

HSC R&D Division require awardees to report on PPI specific activities (as defined in Figure 2), showing how public contributors have influenced the decisions made about research.

- In the earlier stages of the research, public contributors may have helped inform the design of participant information, advertising materials to help with recruitment, surveys or interview guides, or the recruitment strategy.

- Once the research is underway, public contributors may have helped with the oversight of the project through membership of steering/advisory groups, been involved in supporting data collection, or advised on how to overcome recruitment challenges.

- Towards the end of a project, PPI may have helped shape a dissemination plan and got involved co-producing the outputs, for example, co-presenting at events or co-authoring publications such as journal articles, newsletter items, or blogs.

Rather than simply list the number of people involved, or the number of meetings or events that public contributors have attended during the project, it is important to detail how involvement has impacted on the design and delivery of the research project, and the dissemination or implementation of the research findings.

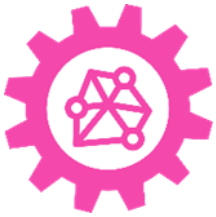
2.2 Guidance on using the UK Standards for Public Involvement in reporting

The UK Standards for Public Involvement are designed to improve the quality and consistency of public involvement in research. Developed over three years by a UK-wide partnership, the standards are a description of what good public involvement looks like and encourage approaches and behaviours that are the hallmark of good public involvement such as flexibility, sharing and learning and respect for each other.

HSC R&D Division encourage awardees to reflect on the UK Standards for Public Involvement when reporting on PPI activities. Table 1 provides a series of questions to help you reflect on the delivery of PPI within a research project.

Table 1: A guide on how to use the UK Standards for Public Involvement to inform the monitoring and reporting of PPI activities

UK Standard for Public Involvement	Meaning	Questions to help you reflect on PPI within a project
Inclusive Opportunities 	**Public involvement partnerships are accessible and include a range of people and groups, as informed by community and research needs** *Research to be informed by a diversity of public experience and insight, so that it leads to treatments and services which reflect these needs*	• How did you try to ensure that people and groups most affected by, and interested in the research, were involved at the earliest stage? • Did you identify any barriers to public contributors getting/staying involved (e.g. payment for time, accessible locations for events or meetings) and how did you overcome these? • Did you offer ongoing choice and flexibility for public contributors (e.g. meeting style and timings, opportunity to offer written feedback, one-to-one meeting outside of larger group meetings)?
Working Together 	**Work together in a way that values all contributions, and that builds and sustains mutually respectful and productive relationships** *Public involvement in research is better when people work together towards a common purpose, and different perspectives are respected*	• Was the purpose or need for PPI jointly defined and recorded with public contributors at the outset of the project? • Did you identify and address any practical requirements needed to work collaboratively with public contributors? • Did you establish a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the public contributors through-out the project e.g. a role description? • How were public contributor's influence, ideas, and contributions recognised and acted upon?

UK Standard for Public Involvement	Meaning	Questions to help you reflect on PPI within a project
Support and Learning 	**Offer and promote support and learning that builds confidence and skills for public involvement in research** *We seek to remove practical and social barriers that stop members of the public and research professionals from making the most of public involvement in research*	• Did you ask public contributors if they had any support needs during the project and plan for how to address these (e.g. technical support, accessible venues, need for adjustments, named person for support)? • Did you offer any training and/or ongoing support the public contributors to help facilitate their involvement in the project (e.g. training on the research process or PPI, support to identify their own support needs)? • Did public contributors have a key point of contact for information or support?
Communications 	**Use plain language for well-timed and relevant communications, as part of involvement plans and activities** *Communicate with a wider audience about public involvement and research, using a broad range of approaches that are accessible and appealing*	• Did you develop a communications plan to keep public contributors informed about project was progress and how their input was shaping the delivery of the project? • Did you use inclusive and flexible communication methods? • Did you put processes in place to offer, gather, act on, and share feedback with the public contributors on a regular basis? • Did you share any learning or achievements from the PPI activities within your research (both positive and negative) e.g. blogs, newsletters, articles?

UK Standard for Public Involvement	Meaning	Questions to help you reflect on PPI within a project
Impact 	**Seek improvement by identifying and sharing the difference that public involvement makes to research** *Understand the changes, benefits and learning gained from the insights and experiences of patients, carers and the public*	• Were public contributors involved in deciding how to assess the impact of PPI on the research project? • What information was collected to assess the impact of PPI, including who was involved and how? • Did you record and implement any changes to the research based on feedback from the public contributors? • Did you reflect on the impacts of PPI on the project in collaboration with public contributors?
Governance 	**Involve the public in research management, regulation, leadership and decision making** *Public involvement in research governance can help research be more transparent and gain public trust*	• How did you ensure that the voices of public contributors were heard, valued, and respected? • Did you monitor and review your PPI plans in partnership with the public contributors? • How did you ensure that public contributors were involved in decision making through-out the project? • Did you allocate realistic resources (including money, staff, and time) to PPI within your research?

2.3 Useful PPI impact and evaluation resources

A number of tools and resources have been developed to help demonstrate the impacts of PPI on a research project. It is important that such tools are used in collaboration with public contributors.

- Public Involvement in Research Impact Toolkit (PIRIT): this consists of a planning tool and a tool to track the impact of public involvement activities within your research. The toolkit is aligned with the UK Standards for Public Involvement.

- PPI Impact Framework: The PPI Impact Framework was developed by PPI Ignite and provides a model that can be used to plan for and capture the impact of a research project that includes PPI contributors and contributions.

- Public Involvement Impact Assessment Framework (PiiAF): The PiiAF and related guidance is primarily aimed at researchers who wish to design an assessment of the impact of public involvement in their research.

- The Involvement Matrix: The Involvement Matrix has been developed to promote collaboration with patients* (from the age of 12) in projects and research. It is a tool for project leaders/researchers. This tool is an aid to dialogue with the patient about the role the patient wishes to play in a project.

- PPI Impact Log: This log from People in Health West of England aims to capture the impacts of Patient and Public Involvement (PPI).

- AIIHPC Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Impact Evaluation Framework: AIIHPC co-produced the framework with PPI contributors from AIIHPC's Voices4Care and researchers from AIIHPC's Palliative Care Research Network and Early Career Research Forum, in collaboration with the PPI Ignite Network at University College Cork.

- GRIPP2 Reporting Checklist: Guidance for reporting of patient and public involvement in health and social care research.

- Example 'Impact Brochure' from AI Multiply: This brochure provides an example of how a project has captured and communicated the impacts of public involvement.

To access the materials from the 'Involvement Matters' project, please click here or scan the QR code below:

Further Information

View HSC R&D Division's PPI Resource Library for Researchers