

ARC NWC Public and Community Involvement, Engagement and Participation Strategy

at a glance

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March 2021

1. Introduction

The NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast (ARC NWC) is a partnership of 60+ member organisations and 70+ public advisers. This partnership provides a unique opportunity to strengthen public involvement in applied health and social care research, to ensure it has real impact.

Our approach to public involvement in research is underpinned by the UK National Standards of Public Involvement in Health & Social Care Research (Figure 1) and the UK Policy Framework for Health & Social Care Research, 2017. As well as being involved in the design and delivery of research, ARC NWC public advisers play an important role in governance through the Steering Board, Management Team meetings and as theme co-leads (Figure 2).

Strong and effective Patient, Public and Community Involvement, Engagement and Participation (PPCIE&P) is central to ensuring that our research and implementation programme is relevant to the needs of patients and the public in our diverse local communities. The overarching aims of our PPCIE&P activities are to co-develop and deliver the aims and objectives of ARC NWC, in particular:

- Ensuring the relevance of the work programme to all regional areas, particularly those with significant health needs
- Developing and demonstrating our approach to local action on social determinants of health and 'place-based' integrated health and social care
- Co-producing research and evidence-based implementation that delivers improvements in health and social care, focussed on equity
- Supporting the development of member organisation PPCIE&P spokes supported by the ARC NWC Public Adviser Forum and PPCIE&P team, mentoring, nurturing and empowering the building of public advisers in research within member organisations
- Disseminating learning and impact stories locally and nationally

2. ARC NWC Strategy for PPCIE&P

Our Vision for PPCIE&P in ARC NWC

“To improve health equity and applied health research through the voice of the population”

Our Mission for PPCIE&P in ARC NWC

“To bring together ARC researchers, member organisations and diverse communities to co-produce applied health research that aims for health equality across the North West Coast”.

Our Objectives for PPCIE&P in ARC NWC

Our objectives are based on the strengths acquired during CLAHRC NWC (Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care), on the opportunities we have identified as we progressed into ARC NWC, and on the challenges we face in strengthening the involvement of communities and health and care organisations from the region’s areas with the most pressing health needs (Table 1).

Our Action areas are to:

- Be recognised locally, regionally and nationally for the quality and consistency of the public involvement in our research
- Continually improve the quality and consistency of public involvement in our research and create a shared understanding of what is good practice
- Ensure that members of the public from across the entire geographical footprint are embedded in all our work; that there is diverse representation across protected characteristics (e.g. age, sex, ethnicity) and other marginalised groups
- Build capacity, increase skills and improve confidence for public involvement and engagement in research including ‘spread and adoption’ of ARC NWC processes across our member organisations and empowering public advisers to engage with researchers and other research stakeholders to strengthen and optimise their work
- Draw on the experiences and knowledge of our public advisers to identify and progress areas of research need (through, for example, public-led research)
- Demonstrate the impact that public involvement can make to applied health research, including exploring the facilitators and barriers to involving and engaging the public in co-production

A summary of objectives is presented in Table 1 which links the objectives to our proposed actions in years 1-5. This strategy is supported by a detailed implementation plan.

Table 1 What we will do

Priority Area	Year 1	Year 2	Years 3-5
<p>Be recognised locally, regionally and nationally for the quality and consistency of the public involvement in our applied health and social care research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop two case studies per year on the difference that PPCIE&P has made to our ARC NWC programme (Y1-5) • With public advisers co-produce and implement the PPCIE&P strategy and action plan • ARC staff and project teams will include public advisers at all stages of developing and presenting at conferences, events and workshops to provide opportunities to promote and disseminate ARC NWC work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPCIE&P team and/or ARC staff with public advisers, produce nationally or regionally relevant publications about PPCIE&P work (including peer-reviewed papers) • Establish a 'steady-state' of public/community advisers and resident co-researchers commensurate with the number of opportunities to support and initiate regional health and care research and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC NWC leads on coproduction of research regionally and nationally • Public advisers collaborate with other member organisations and ARCs and are involved in co-produced projects • Develop member organisation PPCIE&P spokes supported by the ARC NWC Public Adviser Forum and PPCIE&P team, mentoring, nurturing and empowering the building of public advisers in applied health and social care research within member organisations
<p>Continually improve the quality and consistency of public involvement in our research and create a shared understanding of what is good practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All research and implementation projects progressing through ARC processes involve public advisers from the outset • Advisers are involved in research planning meetings, priority setting exercises and implementation roundtables • Public advisers play an active role in the governance of ARC NWC, attend meetings of the Management Team and Steering Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public advisers have a pastoral support system in ARC NWC • Extend our model of community involvement and development of processes, for greater social connectivity between residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and other local stakeholders across ARC-NWC programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With our public advisers and local communities, to have completed at least 3 high quality research/implementation projects/evaluations

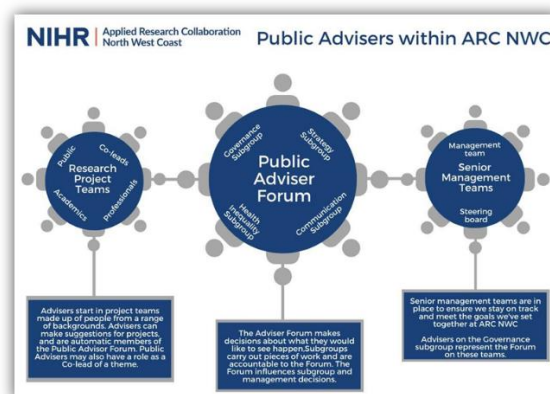
<p>Ensure that members of the public from across the entire geographical footprint are embedded in all our work; that there is diverse representation across protected characteristics (e.g. age, sex, ethnicity) and other marginalised groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement effective system to record and monitor geographic and demographic data of ARC NWC public advisers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers are supported to recruit public advisers in local communities via their projects and the Seldom Heard Groups Forum • Build on existing base of public advisers and their links to communities and community groups to reach out to a wider cross-section of lived experience to support public voices in projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make effective use of digital technologies and other forms of communication, e.g. phone calls, video conferences and email to help tackle geographical and access challenges – enhancing choice of suitable mean of communication • Overcoming barriers to involvement in co-production for individuals (including the digital divide) - focusing on those from seldom heard groups
<p>Build capacity, increase skills and improve confidence for public involvement and engagement in research including: ‘spread and adoption’ of ARC NWC processes across our member organisations; empowering public advisers to engage with researchers and other research stakeholders to strengthen and optimise their work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and support a new leadership role in each of the themes for public advisers to co-lead themes (to ensure our work programme responds to regional community and provider priorities within a national context and that PPCIE&P and coproduction is embedded across the projects and work of the theme, overseeing and developing public advisers working on projects within that theme, reporting and feeding to the PPCIE manager, Governance group and public adviser forum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each ARC NWC project is supported with quality and consistent PPCIE&P throughout, to include: induction for all new advisers; PPCIE&P training for ARC NWC staff, project teams and public advisers • Promote our well-established practice and processes for supporting PPCIE&P to our member organisations to encourage ‘spread and adoption’ across the NWC region • Initiate a community of practice or similar for practitioners of PPCIE&P within our member organisations (liaising with other ARCs nationally) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish arrangements for ARC NWC public advisers to allow access to the resources necessary (for example library resources, computing, training and ID) to coproduce research studies and grant applications for example via associate membership of a HEI • Through CHI theme, co-create visualisation and scenario-planning tools for research and implementation • Through the EPHC theme, develop capacity with our local communities to co-produce evidence-based research and implementation of equitable place-based health and care

<p>Draw on the experiences and knowledge of our public advisers to identify and progress areas of research need (through e.g. public-led research)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Community Research and Engagement Network (COREN); a collaborative of community organisations, ARC staff and academics, public advisers, and representatives of statutory organisations. The COREN will provide a generative and facilitative space for applied health and social care research that is responsive to community need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a process for supporting public advisers to bring their interests and experiences forward as ideas for a research or implementation project • Support at least one public-led external grant application annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and conduct joint training on co-production of research that involves both public advisers and researchers
<p>Demonstrate the impact that public involvement can make to applied health research, including exploring the facilitators and barriers to involving and engaging the public in co-production</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish arrangements for regular monitoring, review and capturing of the impact that PPCIE&P has on ARC-NWC activities and outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop two case studies per year on the difference and impact that PPCIE&P has made to our programme • ARC NWC public advisers act as advocates for health equity (see Health Equity Mainstreaming Strategy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produced lay-person / plain English research articles, publications, presentations, blogs, videos etc which demonstrate and communicate the benefits of involving and engaging patients / public / communities in applied health and social care research • Share PPCIE&P impact both internally and externally

Figure 1: The UK Standards for Public Involvement NWC

INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES
Offer public involvement opportunities that are accessible and that reach people and groups according to research needs.
WORKING TOGETHER
Work together in a way that values all contributions, and that builds and sustains mutually respectful and productive relationships.
SUPPORT AND LEARNING
Offer and promote support and learning opportunities that build confidence and skills for public involvement in research.
GOVERNANCE
Involve the public in research management, regulation, leadership and decision making.
COMMUNICATIONS
Use plain language for well-timed and relevant communications, as part of involvement plans and activities.
IMPACT
Seek improvement by identifying and sharing the difference that public involvement makes to research

Figure 2: The roles of Public Advisers in ARC



3. Strategy Development and Review

Our approach builds on a strong track-record of collaborative working progressed since 2014 through CLAHRC NWC, with members of the public and communities in our region.

To develop our strategy to address the specific aims and objectives of ARC NWC we established a sub-group of fifteen public advisers who, through a series of video meetings and linked tasks:

- conducted a PA SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) analysis of PPCIE&P to inform the setting of objectives and associated ‘headline’ actions;
- developed and refined a statement of the vision and mission and objectives for public advisers involved in ARC NWC.

Strategy development was also informed by: findings from an evaluation of public involvement in CLAHRC NWC; Staff SWOT analysis completed during an ARC NWC ‘all staff’ Away Day (October 2019); workshops with researchers reflecting on their experiences of PPCIE&P; a Strategy Development workshop (March 2020); discussions within the national ARC’s Patient Involvement Community (PIC) group.

PPCIE&P is a rapidly developing practice, and as such this strategy will be regularly reviewed; with a first formal review to be conducted by end of April 2022.

4. Background Information

ARC NWC is hosted by NHS Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group and is led by Professor Mark Gabbay (Director of ARC NWC). ARC NWC focuses on addressing the considerable health inequalities in the region and promoting health equity through our research (see our Health Equity Mainstreaming Strategy <https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/resources/health-equity-mainstreaming-strategy-2020-2024/>).

Our work builds on the successful initiatives developed in CLAHRC NWC during 2014-2019, and the ongoing commitments and contributions of member organisations to work with communities. ARC NWC's vision is to build meaningful co-production into all aspects of our work. Our work programme is conducted through six themes that were co-produced with our member organisations and members of the public:

- Person Centred Complex Care (PCCC)
- Improving Population Health (IPH)
- Equitable Place Based Health and Care (EPBHC)
- Health and Care Across the Life Course (HACAL)
- Methodological Innovation Development Adaptation and Support (MIDAS)
- Care and Health Informatics (CHI)

The work of the themes is supported by the Implementation and Capacity Building Team (IMPACT) and the PPCIE&P Team.

Our PPCIE&P Team includes: an academic lead (L Frith); Administrator (R Ball); Researcher (S Hassan); Manager (S Wallis); and Community Research and Engagement Network (COREN) Manager (A Edwards). Our public advisers (many of whom joined during CLAHRC NWC) come from across our geographic footprint, with a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities and ages.