

Coproduction & Public Involvement Approach

We embed public involvement and health inequalities in all our work, from idea generation to implementing findings. The following summarises our approach and procedures to operationalise, enact coproduction and public involvement in ARC NWC and our applied health research with member organisations. Our coproduced strategy PPCIE&P strategy is publicly available on our web pages: <https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ARCNWCPPCIEPSSstrategy.pdf>

✓ **Embedded structure, vision and culture**

Coproduction of ARC NWC research is mandated and a requirement of research project adoption. Public involvement is central to the organisation's vision and strategies. A culture of involving and engaging the public runs through the organisation; it is the default position; a thread throughout, from senior leadership and champions for public involvement within the organisation's structure to baseline cases for adoption and discussion and the equity toolkit process and form (www.hiat.org). Public advisors co-lead our Research 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), alongside academic and professional workforce leads representing member organisations. Every research project is coproduced with public advisors as part of the research team. We ensure the relevance of the work programme geographically and equitably using the HIAT tool, & the Public Involvement Impact Assessment Framework (PiiAF) & Guidance for Reporting Involvement of Patients and the Public (GRIPP2) to review, evaluate and report public involvement process and impact.

Through the ARC NWC Community Research and Engagement Network (CoREN) we extend the reach of the ARC into communities across the patch.

ARC NWC strategy for public involvement and coproduction (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ARCNWCPPCIEPSSstrategy.pdf>) there are dedicated involvement pages on the website (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/>) CoREN (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/coren/>) GRIPP2 training (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/impact/>) PiiAF (<https://www.piaf.org.uk/>)

✓ **Ensure communities are involved in developing, creating and doing research which has the potential to impact in local places**

The CoREN brings together key partners from across health and social care, and includes VCFSE and statutory organisations (local government, public health, and NHS), ARC staff, academics, and public advisors, as well as other stakeholders from across the north-west coast, in an innovative collaborative. The CoREN enables us to have conversations BEFORE research questions / projects are developed i.e. the priorities for research come from the communities rather than from researchers. Our Regular Seldom heard voices forum brings together representatives of seldom heard groups from across the NWC to share issues experienced by the groups they represent and is co-chaired by our public advisors. This complements Public Involvement through discussions in theme meetings and member organisations with public

advisors, discussions with and presentations to the PA forum meetings and integrating PAs into research teams, critical reviews and prioritisation of proposals.

- Discuss how best to enhance inclusion in applied health research with stakeholders including researchers, practitioners, commissioners and other communities

This is facilitated by:

- 1) CAPACITY BUILDING & KNOWLEDGE MOBILISATION - building capacity with local system partners and the public to become involved in applied health research.
- 2) RESEARCH READY AND ACTIVE – Harnessing knowledge and insight from the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, we ensure that local systems have the resources to be able to engage and influence applied health research.
- 3) COMMUNITY READY RESEARCHERS – We support researchers to develop the skills, values and behaviours to meaningfully engage within local systems & communities

Seldom Heard voices forum (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/seldom-heard-forum/>)
COREN webpages (<https://neighbourhoodresilience.uk/coren-new-developments/>)

✓ **Research ideas & Recruitment, registration and induction**

We encourage ARC Themes and research teams to have conversations with communities, member organisations and others via our Connected Research Communities model utilising Research Development Networks and the CoREN to identify unmet needs and research questions. This supplements discussions with public advisors in theme meetings and other research meetings within our collaborative Connected Research Communities. Once research is initiated we use a variety of mechanisms to keep advisors and communities involved in coproduction of research (via relevant patient groups, third sector and community contacts to recruit new advisors when needed). Providing a variety of ways people can apply for PA roles (written, verbal etc.) Documents and procedures are in place to support registration and induction such as a short briefing pack, buddying or mentoring of new contributors. A face-to-face opportunity to explain why public contributors are recruited and their roles (see below).

ARC NWC provides all new contributors with an Advisor welcome pack (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Welcome-pack-01-04-20.pdf>) (a copy of the Code of conduct (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Code-of-Conduct-for-Advisers-01-04-20.pdf>))

Each new Public Advisor has an admin one to one with Ruth Ball and an orientation one to one with Public Involvement manager Selina Wallis. We have a buddying scheme matching up experienced PAs to new PAs

✓ **Clear roles and expectations**

We outline the roles and expectations of public contributors with clarity and consistency. Role descriptions include the commitments from both public contributors and the organisation / staff. A documented process for public contributors to report concerns and issues of non-compliance with expectations.

ARC NWC has developed a role description template that can assist staff think through the role and expectations of a public advisor contributing to their project (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/working-with-advisers-2/>).

The Code of conduct is shared with all public advisors and staff (see above link). PhD students and Interns are given guidance on PPI as part of their induction. We have ARC NWC PPI team guidelines for dealing with distressed members of the public and a Public engagement complaints procedure

✓ **Early, meaningful and sustained involvement**

We involve communities and public advisors in collaborative conversations to identify research priorities. Once research starts we involve the public in research teams from research question/project planning stages to enable greater influence and additional perspective prior to decision-making. We support public contributors to participate as co-applicants on grants and co-authors on papers. We encourage public contributors to contribute to data collection and analysis. We support and train staff and partners to understand the how to implement, value and evaluate the impact of public involvement. Keeping in touch with public contributors – regularly, named contact (see communication below). Outline timescales and deadlines as early as possible; notify early and with explanation if these change. Consider practicalities that can ensure sustained involvement (e.g. suitable times for meetings, accessible venues, booking travel). Key performance indicators are recorded via Research themes on involvement and presented to the management team, steering board and NIHR. We collect KPIs on metrics to measure this via No of PA co investigators, co-authors and the GRIPP2PPI impact tool in journal papers

All ARC NWC projects use a Health Inequalities Assessment Toolkit that ensures project leads and staff identify the communities most effected by their work and encourage further engagement and involvement with relevant groups (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/resources/hiat/>). Public Advisors are involved in health equity mainstreaming (https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/A3313_ARC-NWC-Health-Equity-Mainstreaming-Strategy-2020-Exec-Summary.docx-1.pdf) Training is also available to staff, member organisations, PhD students and Interns and partners (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zI9DaI4eeFY>) here. Via the CoREN- Community Engagement courses can be accessed by all ARC researchers / staff to embed the values around meaningfully engaging with the public

✓ **Broad scope of involvement**

We support and offer flexibility in methods for getting involved, how and what contributions can be made and who can make them. Mechanisms exist for peer support and bringing together the collective community of public contributors and member organisations. We work with partner organisations to build capacity to support coproduction with a focus on research, where research teams including public advisors/contributors work together to co-produce their studies with a focus on health equity. Increasing skills and improving confidence and empowering public advisers to engage with researchers and other research stakeholders to strengthen and optimise their work. We support and public advisers are part of the Public Involvement and Engagement Sub-Group held by the - Methodological Innovation, Development, Adaptation and Support (MIDAS) Cross-cutting Research Theme

✓ *Our member offer for PPCIEP can be found here (https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ARC-NWC-public-involvement-engagement-and-coproduction-offer-to-members_Final-1.pdf)*

✓ *All ARC NWC public advisors automatically join the Advisor Forum. It is responsible for providing a strategic steer to public involvement in ARC NWC, how the public engagement*

policy is delivered, and acts as a peer support group. (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PA-Forum-Terms-of-Reference-July-2021.docx>)

✓ **Recognition, feeling valued and respected**

Empowered, recognised, respected and valued communities & members of the public are equal partners in ARC work / projects. When public involvement is rewarded financially it should be in a clear and consistent way. Offer reward, incentives or support to ensure no exclusion from taking part on financial grounds. Recognise, use and respect the skills and experience public contributors bring to the project. Written principles and values such as equal partnerships, diverse and inclusive involvement, embrace open discussion, pool diverse opinions, respectful and compassionate, friendly and informal atmosphere and environment. A no-blame culture in the organisation, understanding that contributors may want to withdraw, but able to re-engage later is essential.

The ARC NWC payment policy is supported by documents detailing payment process, registration process, fee form and expense form (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ARC-NWC-Public-Engagement-Payment-Policy-Updated-May-2021.docx>) Our documents/policies can be found in our Managers pack which is on our Teams group (contact us for access) our ARC NWC PPI team guidelines for dealing with distressed members of the public and the ARC NWC PPI team Public engagement complaints procedure can be found here(<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/working-with-advisers-2/>)

✓ **Thoughtful and timely communication**

Communication in the ARC with the public and communities should be jargon free, respectful and honest. During research frequent communication should occur at all stages of the projects, from early design through to completion, including in times of little activity for public contributors. Researchers should provide regular feedback on the input of advisors & connected communities to the project/work programme and the impact they make (see CLAHRC East of England https://www.clahrc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Guidance-for-Researchers-PPI-Feedback_2018.pdf).

ARC staff and project teams include public advisors at all stages of developing and presenting at conferences, events and workshops to provide opportunities to promote and disseminate ARC NWC work.

We provide access to technology needed to work remotely and provide support when necessary with wi-fi, software and hardware to reduce the impact of the digital divide. We monitor both public contributor and researcher experiences regularly via the forum, co-leads and surveys/interviews.

ARC NWC produces a regular newsletter which is issued to all public advisors (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/resources/newsletters/>) public advisors attend Arcfests, Research development networks(<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/research-development-networks/>) and our regular Advisor forums

✓ **Opportunities for personal development**

Contribution from the public will be maximised with training and support on how to be effectively involved. Appropriate formal / informal training for the role and skills development for the specific project. Recognise the potential for growth and development of contributors.

Advisors receive regular training via the Public Advisor Forum, workshops and in individual research projects. Opportunities are available to represent the ARC at regional and national meetings and via presentations/conferences etc.

ARC NWC developed a learning journal available for all public advisors; a space to reflect, develop and grow. See <https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved>

✓ **Measure added value and impact**

Knowing whether public involvement makes a difference to projects, to work programmes, to participants, to decisions and to policy. Deciding early on what measures will be used to evidence the impact. Use of qualitative and quantitative KPI measures.

*ARC NWC regularly measures the activity of public advisors for example through written case studies, evaluations, video clips, co-authorship of papers and posters (<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/resources/publications/>), ARC NWC research describes our methods and the impact of coproduction via the *Guidance for Reporting Involvement of Patients and Public GRIPP2* in our published journal papers.*