

## **No research about us without us: ARC NWC public involvement, engagement and coproduction offer to members**

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**The NIHR funds local collaborations to support applied health research and research on implementation of health and care evidence into day-to-day practice.** The NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast (ARC NWC) is a partnership of 60+ member organisations and 90+ public advisers/community members. This partnership provides a unique opportunity to strengthen, innovate and embolden public involvement in applied health research across the North West Coast.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/collaborating-in-applied-health-research.htm>

Public involvement & engagement with a focus on coproduction has increasingly been seen as a key component for multiple fields including commissioning, healthcare, research and patient safety. Our diverse member organisations have statutory, local, and ethical drivers to embed effective patient, public and community involvement in their organisations and work, and we can help with that!

Our established model of PPCIE (Patient, Public and Community Involvement, Engagement and Participation (PPCIE&P) means our research and implementation programme is relevant to the needs of patients and the public in our diverse local communities, and makes real improvements in health and social care, focused on equity. We do this via coproduction (a way of working, whereby everybody works together on an equal basis) between researchers, our public advisers and members in every ARC NWC research project (including PhDs).

ARC NWC activities integrate Public Involvement throughout its programmes: research, implementation and administrative. We also strongly advocate, and support, robust public involvement in work linked to ARC NWC and within the member organisations. This paper highlights what we do and how ARC NWC can work with you to build capacity and sustainability in public involvement in research, implementation and other associated activities across your organisation.

Our public advisers are recruited via researchers, members and recruitment in deprived and seldom heard communities and are representatives of many of our North West multicultural communities. Our model includes (see attached document for more information on our model)

- ✓ **Embedded structure, vision and culture**
- ✓ **Ensuring communities are involved in developing, creating and doing research which has the potential to impact in local places**
- ✓ **Recruitment, registration, induction to support coproduction and initiate research ideas**

- ✓ **Clear roles and expectations of public contributors and researchers**
- ✓ **Early, sustained and meaningful involvement**
- ✓ **Broad scope of involvement**
- ✓ **Recognition, feeling valued and respected**
- ✓ **Thoughtful and timely communication and feedback**
- ✓ **Opportunities for personal development**
- ✓ **Measure the added value and impact of coproduction and involvement**

Hear some of the stories of our public advisers here:

<https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/get-involved/>

The public voice is also central to ARC governance; at the management meetings and on the steering board of ARC NWC. (see UK Standards b.) In addition, we have implemented a new leadership role with Public Adviser co leading our Research Themes' alongside senior academics, this helps break down established power dynamics and helps ensure the public voice is central to research coproduction and supporting themes to embed community consultation into their work. These new leadership roles and the themes are being supported via a bespoke coaching programme (from the University of Liverpool Academy).

We are committed to building capacity in member organisations 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.

### **ARC NWC Resource to support coproduction and involvement with the public**

ARC NWC has considerable **resources** to support public involvement and coproduction including: A dedicated team comprising academic lead (Paula Byrne) Public involvement manager (Selina Wallis), research lead (Shaima Hassan) and administrator (Ruth Ball), 75+ diverse public advisers geographically based around the North West- and via these, links to communities and community groups reaching out to a wide cross-section of lived experience. These are experienced and skilled in a number of areas (e.g. leadership, governance, communication, equity, facilitation, presentation, grant applications, ethics, data collection, analysis, focus groups, qualitative methods).

The **Community Research and Engagement Network** (COREN) facilitated by the Stakeholder Research and Engagement Manager provides “a generative and facilitative space for applied health and social care research that is responsive to community need”, by building relationships between researchers and other key community partners, for example in the voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector, and facilitating joint-working through the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

The **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 discuss how best to enhance inclusion in applied health research with stakeholders including researchers, practitioners, commissioners and other communities.

Expertise in **evaluation** and participatory approaches is supported by our MIDAS theme PPIE methodology group, via our Impact theme looking at involvement in implementation via our connected research communities' initiatives and our Care and Health informatics theme looking at big data.

We have made considerable experience in effective use of **digital technologies** to support embedded, participatory, PPCIEP via online methods throughout lockdown and research in these methods.

**Locally** we work together with other NIHR organisations and our local health systems. **Nationally** we link to eighteen other NIHR ARCs and their PPIE leads via regular meetings.

### **What we can offer members to support public involvement and coproduction?**

- Programme of training; (e.g. Impact via Gripp2<sup>1</sup> tool, social media blogging and Twitter)
- a Public Involvement and Engagement Sub-Group held by the- Methodological Innovation, Development, Adaptation and Support (MIDAS) theme
- Community Research & Engagement Network (COREN)
- Indexed and updated resources;
- Forum for PPI leads to come together;
- Strategies and policies ready for adaptation and spread
- Buddying/mentoring for PAs and PPI leads;
- Expert consultation on research/evaluation PPCIEP research related needs;
- Guidance on how to evaluate the impact of coproduction and involvement on research

### **What will we do next to support public involvement and coproduction in research?**

Initial conversations with many of our members have begun in 2021, including the Innovation Agency, Clinical Research Networks (CRN) North West, Liverpool Health Partners, NIHR Research Design Service North West.

### **What can you do next?**

**Please get in touch with us to discuss your needs and how we can support your organisation to embed public involvement and coproduction in research in your organisation at [selinaw@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:selinaw@liverpool.ac.uk) or [arcnwc@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:arcnwc@liverpool.ac.uk)**

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<sup>1</sup> Gripp2 is a framework for recording and reporting public involvement in research