

**Research Funding Calls:  
Patient and Public Involvement Guidelines**

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## Patient and Public Involvement Guidelines for Research Funding Calls

This document provides guidelines to embed patient and public involvement (PPI) in a research funding call. The document provides advice and steps to ensuring that PPI is meaningfully undertaken throughout the entire funding cycle. The guidelines were developed by Health Data Research UK with input from public contributors who were involved in shaping and developing this document. The guidelines were developed for internal funding calls, however, have been designed to be shared with external stakeholders conducting funding calls.

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*You are able to use the sections and resources relevant to your funding call.*

### 1. Funding call application and initial selection criteria:

The funding call must require proposals for funding to demonstrate that patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) is an integral part of the proposed work.

Call documents must require applicants to specify in their application (a) how the proposal has been developed with patients and members of the public, or informed by patient and public views, and (b) how PPIE will drive the research for the funded period.

Further, it must be clear to applicants that failure to include PPIE will disqualify the application (except in exceptional circumstances).

## 2. Application Form:

The application form should have a section dedicated to PPIE. It should request:

- **A plain English summary that explains the research and why it is important, of a length appropriate to the sums of money offered.**
- **The stages of research which will include PPIE**
- **A set of questions as outlined below to elicit further details**

**The application form should also advise the ways that applicants can be supported developing their PPIE plans. For example:**

Some research teams may require extra support. HDR UK has a team dedicated to PPIE and applicants can contact in the first instance the Public Involvement and Engagement manager to request support and advice: [sinduja.manohar@hdruk.ac.uk](mailto:sinduja.manohar@hdruk.ac.uk)

[Download a template](#)

### a. Additional Resources:

National Institute For Health Research provide overall guidance [PPI \(Patient and Public Involvement\) resources for applicants to NIHR research programmes](#)

Cancer Research UK have a freely available toolkit for researchers [Patient involvement toolkit for researchers | Cancer Research UK](#)

### b. Plain English Summary:

It is helpful to outline to the applicant how to write a Plain English Summary. Please find below an example you may include in your application form:

*The plain English summary should be written in simple terms that a member of the public can understand. It should allow the reader to understand the aims of the research, the reasons why it is important and how the research will be conducted. Researchers must include enough detail to allow lay reviewers to review and score the application.*

We advise:

- *Avoiding technical language (including abbreviations and acronyms) - if you have to use them provide a clear explanation*
- *Using plain English and short sentences. Try to keep to short words, and where possible, avoid words with more than one meaning where this might lead to ambiguity.*

- *Breaking up the text, for example use short paragraphs or bullet points which can make it easier for some people to follow your summary.*
- *Asking someone without a scientific or research background (perhaps a family member or friend) to read your draft and advise if anything is unclear.*
- *As a preparation for that, try a readability checker online, e.g. <https://readabilityformulas.com/freetests/six-readability-formulas.php> - aim for 11-14-year-old audience level, which is slightly above the average reading age of the UK population.*

**c. Stages of Research which will Include PPIE:**

The application form should include a checklist to allow applicants to highlight the stages of research where PPIE has been included or is planned to be included:

<b>Stage of research:</b>	<b>PPIE has been included: yes/no and a short summary of what occurred</b>	<b>PPIE planned if funding is successful: yes/no and a short summary of what is planned</b>
Identifying and/or prioritising research questions and/or outcomes		
Design of the research		
Planning/contributing to development of PPIE activities		
Management of the research (e.g. steering/advisory group)		
Undertaking/analysing the research (e.g. member of research team)		
Dissemination of research findings to academic/stakeholder audiences		

Developing communication/engagement activities for the public		
Other (please expand)		

**d. Questions to Elicit Further Details on PPIE:**

The following questions should be included in the application form/requirements:

1. How have people with relevant lived experience (which might include carers) and/or members of the public helped to select and shape the research questions you intend to answer?
2. How have people with lived experience (which might include carers) and/or members of the public been involved in designing the proposal, its objectives and the outcomes to be measured?
3. If people with lived experience, carers and/or members of the public have NOT been involved in the research, please explain why they have not been involved.
4. Please outline in detail how people with lived experience (including carers) and/or members of the public will be involved in the research, if funded, and how they will shape the development of this research. *The above stages of research table may be*

*helpful to structure your response. It is important to give as much detail as you can in this section to ensure that the reviewers are able to accurately score your application.*

**3. Reviewing and Scoring Applications:**

The panel of reviewers scoring applications and awarding funding should include a minimum of two people or 30% public contributors, whichever is the larger number. Public contributors should be given sufficient time to review applications. Depending on how many they are being requested to review, a minimum of two weeks for review, with at least two weeks’ notice beforehand is necessary.

The role of the public reviewers is to review and score the PPIE plans as well as the intended benefit to patients and the public the project will have.

The methods for scoring of all components of the application, but especially those relating to PPIE should be designed to align with the specific funding call and outlined in the call documents to

which applicants respond. This is essential to give applicants an understanding of the funder's approach to PPIE.

There are two options for reviewing and scoring application:

**Option 1:** If there is sufficient time, funding and capacity, public contributors should be given the opportunity to review applications and ask applicants for more detail or answers to their questions about the proposed research and/or involvement of patient, carers or members of the public.

Applicants should then be given opportunity to provide more information before the reviewers undertake their final scoring. A panel meeting to discuss applications can be beneficial and helpful to ensure that all views are captured.

**Option 2:** Public contributors review the submitted applications and score solely on what has been provided. This should be made clear in the application process and applicants should be encouraged to submit as much information as possible. A panel meeting to discuss applications can be beneficial and helpful to ensure that all views are captured.

#### 4. Reviewing and Providing Feedback on PPIE Plans:

Once funding has been offered, the research team should provide a finalised PPIE plan. This should include:

- Outline of all planned PPIE for the duration of the study (acknowledge this will grow and develop with time)
- Who will be involved, and how will that process work? (e.g., will the opportunity to be involved be advertised through HDR UK Voices?)
- Timeline of actions and activities

[Download a template](#)

#### 5. Monitoring PPIE Plans and Evaluation:

PPIE must be included at all updates (milestone assessments). Progress should be mapped against the project PPIE plan and if the PPIE milestone has not been met, the research team must provide an explanation as to why this has not occurred.

Example questions and template:

- Has PPIE activity commenced? Please detail what activity has occurred using this template
- Please detail any **obstacles or difficulties** experienced by the research team in meeting PPIE milestones.

It may be helpful for the research teams to keep a log of PPIE throughout their research which could then provide the basis of their evaluation. Evaluation of PPIE is essential and providing a case study on their PPIE experience and outcomes is encouraged. The log should include:

- Instances of input, where public contributors had input, but were not involved in decisions.
- Instances of involvement, where public contributors were involved in decisions, but not in the work leading up to those decisions.
- Instances of co-production, where public contributors, researchers (and clinicians) have worked together to design/decide something.

[Download a template](#)

## 6. APPENDIX:

1. Application Form <https://www.hdruk.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/PPIE-Application-Form.docx>
2. PPIE Plan Template <https://www.hdruk.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/PPIE-Plan-Template.docx>
3. Monitoring Template <https://www.hdruk.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/PPIE-Monitoring-Template.docx>

For any questions or advice please contact the Patient and Public Involvement Team at HDR UK (Sinduja.Manohar@hdruk.ac.uk as PPIE Manager in the first instance).

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