

## Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) Strategy for NIHR Policy Research Unit on Older People and Frailty (PRU)

### 1. Strategy overview, aims and objectives

This strategy for Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) sets out the way in which the Older People and Frailty Policy Research Unit (OPFPRU) will work to include the views of patients and the public on policies relating to older people and frailty. It sets out the way different perspectives might be best garnered, understood, and represented. The intention is to ensure that diverse viewpoints can be considered in assessing research. Underlying this intention is a desire to allow for meaningful involvement. We will ensure that, where possible, our research is visible, accessible and responsive to the views of patients and the public.

We take account of the NIHR INVOLVE ([www.invo.org.uk](http://www.invo.org.uk)) definitions of patient and public involvement, engagement and participation alongside the standards, values and principles of public involvement in research, recognising that all three elements are complementary, and essential to maximising the relevance, quality and impact of our research. We acknowledge the [INCLUDE roadmap](#) for including engagement of under-served groups in research, aspiring to ensure we maximise all opportunities for involvement, actively seeking to reduce barriers to inclusion.

Our PPIE activity is aligned to the [UK standards for public involvement](#) framework including governance, support and learning, inclusive opportunities, impact and communications. We will also work with the NIHR to ensure PPIE in our research. Our PPIE will build on strong regional networks in our respective centres, and we will ensure our PPIE also builds on our established capabilities for reaching the public and patients of services for older people and frailty.

The vision for the PRU is to be an authoritative source of evidence-based information for policymakers. We will produce timely responses to immediate questions, but also anticipate future challenges, identifying important trends in care needs and developments in service provision. The PPIE activity is intended to, where possible, ensure the activity is visible, accessible, and responsive to patients and the public.

#### **Aims**

1. To develop and deliver effective PPIE, where possible<sup>1</sup>, in research and responses produced by the PRU.

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<sup>1</sup>Some activities of the PRU may preclude more 'traditional' approaches to PPIE. For example, requests for rapid responses may preclude the opportunity for PPIE because of time constraints. To mitigate in this case, any PPIE views contained in the research under review would be included in the response. In addition, we

2. To establish and maintain clear routes and transparent processes to support meaningful PPIE, and, where possible, to make our research and wider activity visible and accessible to the public and professionals.
3. To have a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion across under-served communities.

### **Objectives**

1. To devise and regularly review bespoke processes to enable us to understand the diverse perspectives of patients and the public on research and policy relating to older people and frailty.
2. To provide opportunities, where possible, for patients and the public to inform and to provide a 'reality check' on research and responses.
3. To ensure, where possible, that our research is informed by patient and public priorities and needs. Our projects have a responsive and bespoke interaction with patient and public participants which allows for more a more bespoke and compelling connection.
4. To engage meaningfully with patients and the public in debate and dialogue about research about older people and frailty, and to produce and disseminate information that is accessible to both policy users and the public.<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Processes for involvement and engagement**

### ***PRU Advisory group***

The PRU has an advisory group made up of representatives from Department of Health and Social Care, arms-length bodies, and policy users<sup>3</sup>. The PRU Advisory Board includes representatives from the [Newcastle Elders Council](#) and the [Greater Manchester Older People's Network](#). PPIE Advisory Board members are directly connected to local and regional government, community based ageing well groups, equalities panels and health and social care boards based throughout Newcastle and Greater Manchester. These relationships ensure amplification of issues raised at all levels of accountability.

### ***NIHR Infrastructure***

To achieve our aims and objectives we will actively seek to engage and involve experts by experience both lived and professional, to inform all our work. Building on our well-established relationships and networks at local, regional and national level we will, where possible, ensure PPIE is embedded in work streams and facilitates close collaboration with all project team members. To achieve this we actively collaborate with the NIHR infrastructure for example working alongside the NIHR Applied Research Collaborations and with colleagues based in other NIHR Policy Research Units, in a meaningful and collaborative way, sharing good practice approaches, learning and insights. The OPFPRU has allocated

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need effective processes to protect confidential and/or sensitive information and we propose to identify specific channels for PPIE within the PRU that recognises and protects the sensitive or confidential nature of certain documents.

<sup>2</sup> We recognise that information that is accessible to different audiences will need to be produced. For example, short reports including series of questions may be more effective in seeking public engagement. Whereas, longer, more detailed reports may be required by policy makers. We anticipate that information will draw on the same evidence but, for the sake of accessibility, may be presented in different formats.

<sup>3</sup> Policy user views - the views of users of health and social care services, will be gathered through two main routes. First, via representative bodies such as Age UK and second, via existing direct user networks such as VOICE, MICRA, GMOPN and NEC.

funds within the budget, to resource PPIE and enable engagement and inclusion of experts by experience in specific research projects and activities.

### **3. Reaching people and understanding perspectives**

We engage, as required, and collaborate with key partners, including the public, patients, other stakeholders, researchers, health and social care professionals, local health and care infrastructure and voluntary and community organisations.

We have a specific strategic focus on equality, inclusion and diversity: ensuring we are flexible, pro-active in our approach to PPIE, and effective in capturing and listening to relevant and appropriate voices. This especially including people who feel isolated or excluded by geography, ethnicity, sexual identity, culture, technology or socioeconomic status.

We provide accessible information and support for PPIE (for researchers and PPIE members) to help develop practical skills and develop effective models for PPIE, building on what is needed and appropriate for specific settings, understanding the local environment and context.

Our PPIE has a national reach and close collaboration between our partners is an essential ingredient of success. We work closely with VOICE and MICRA (see below) to help deliver our PPIE aims and objectives, as well as with the Greater Manchester Older People's Network and Newcastle Elders Council. Specifically, we:

- Regularly connect, discuss and develop a shared and consistent approach that aligns with strategic priorities and shares learning.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships and opportunities for collaboration and ensure effective communication between partners.
- Identify cross cutting activity and develop joint delivery plans, with shared resourcing ensuring that what works well is shared and accessible to ensure the best available information.
- Improve support available to researchers and patients and the public locally to maximise awareness of PPIE in research and link to a range of resources to help understand, develop and embed PPIE in our research.
- Ensure a focus on inclusion, equality and diversity and widening participation – working closely with patient and community groups in each region to ensure any approaches are sensitively developed in specific social and cultural contexts.

#### ***Working with VOICE***

[VOICE-Global](#) is an established national organisation, hosted at the [National Innovation Centre for Ageing](#) and the [NIHR-Innovation Observatory](#), established to specifically harness the insights and ideas of the public on research and innovation. The VOICE public engagement programme ensures that the research is focused on, and driven by, public insights, needs and priorities. The OPFPRU PPIE will utilise the VOICE digital online platform which has national reach, and this will be a key innovative mechanism for us in enabling and facilitating the public to have visible opportunities to connect to each other as part of our activity. VOICE is an open platform, but partners can host activity in closed areas open only

to invited members if preferred. The platform translates into most languages and is fully accessible for people with sight and hearing loss.

The VOICE platform will enable us to co-ordinate the active involvement of members of the public across our centres and beyond. It also provides a forum for researchers, PPIE members, and wider collaborators.

### ***Working with MICRA***

Our close relationship with [MICRA](#) (Manchester Institute for Collaborative for Research on Ageing) enables us to engage with a large network of organisations, researchers, community groups, organisations and individual older adults and carers. Supporting a community of more than 300 affiliated researchers, MICRA engages critically with stakeholders and policy makers at global, national, regional, local and community levels to deliver research with demonstrable policy impact.

MICRA's aim is to embed contributions from older people and stakeholders into all stages of research, ensuring that work has meaning and direct societal relevance. MICRA is linked to the [Healthy Ageing Research Group](#) (HARG), which includes all University of Manchester team members. The HARG has well established relationships with the [Greater Manchester Ageing Hub](#), within the [GM Combined Authority](#), tasked with bringing together plans to support local older people. A range of key policy and practice representatives from across Greater Manchester and the UK participate as hub partners.

MICRA will support the OPFPRU through facilitating involvement and engagement from a broad range of stakeholder organisations and individual older people and carers. Operating at both a strategic level and to support individual projects in the recruitment of experts by experience. Involvement and engagement will be both proactive and reactive, according to the needs of the PRU

### **Implementing, reviewing and updating the Strategy**

This strategy document is complemented by project level approaches, which we will use to implement PPIE within the OPF PRU. To see an example of implementation of this strategy see this [Case Study](#).

To ensure that involvement and engagement is meaningful, appropriate and progressive in approach, this strategy is annually reviewed, updated and signed off by the Senior Management Group and PRU Advisory Board.