

"Obviously everyone's a little bit nervous when you go into a room of people you don't know, but it was really welcoming, everyone's so nice and friendly... We felt really valued, like you were making a difference."

Mark, Public Contributor

Welcome to Vocal
Your guide to working with us

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in joining the People's Forum for the RAPID-RT project. This is a unique opportunity to help shape how real-world NHS patient data is used to improve radiotherapy.

This guide includes all the information about the Forum, more detail about Vocal, what to expect at the Forum events, and our guide for working together.

For any questions, please contact **Lissie Fahey** at elisabeth.fahey@mft.nhs.uk or by phone **07483 130252**.

People's Forum

The People's Forum is a 3-day event bringing together a diverse group of people to explore a new approach to patient care called Rapid Learning. Over the three days you will hear from researchers, clinicians, and people with lived experience.

You will reflect on what you have heard, share your views in small group discussions, and work with others to identify the values, principles, and safeguards you believe are most important. **You don't need to be an expert** - just willing to reflect, listen, and share your views in a supportive environment.

People's Forum dates

- Thursday 6 November 2025 10.30am- 4.30pm
- Thursday 20 November 2025 10.30am - 4.30pm
- Thursday 4 December 2025 10.30am - 4.30pm

Please arrive **by 10.15am each day** so we can begin on time

What is Vocal?

Vocal creates opportunities for people to find out about, and have a say in, health research. We work with researchers who are aiming to improve treatments for people.

For the People's Forum we are working with Professor Corinne Faivre-Finn, Dr Gareth Price and their team of researchers from The Christie Hospital and the University of Manchester on the Rapid Learning project. Vocal is a not-for-profit organisation, hosted by Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with The University of Manchester. See more about what we do at wearevocal.org.



The RAPID-RT Research Programme

One in two people will develop cancer at some point in their lives, with 38% of cancer cases being preventable. Radiotherapy is an important treatment for people with lung cancer, especially for those who cannot receive other kinds of treatment. However, the powerful x-ray beams used in radiotherapy to destroy the tumour can also damage nearby healthy tissue, which causes side-effects. Research has found that in radiotherapy for lung cancer, if x-ray beams hit certain parts of the heart during radiotherapy for lung cancer, patients may die earlier than they otherwise would.

RAPID-RT research is exploring how to reduce the radiotherapy dose given to the heart. It is hoped that as a result patients will live for longer. To find out more, visit our website:

[RAPID-RT](#)

What is Rapid Learning?

Rapid learning is a new way of quickly checking if small changes in treatment are helping patients. Doctors sometimes adjust how a treatment is given because of new research, the development of new technology or lessons from other hospitals. Sometimes these are introduced without being evaluated.

Rapid learning could allow these treatment changes to be monitored so doctors can check whether the new way is at least as good as previous treatments, or it improves survival or reduces side effects. This can work by using data that your health care team already collects and saves in your medical records. So, no extra testing is required. This could be data on your disease type, what type of treatment you were given, whether you experienced side effects and how long you survive after treatment. This data can be made anonymous, so no one knows it came from you.

Working with this data allows your health care team to understand what treatments worked for you. It can also be used to help see which types of treatment are better for people with your disease type and whether future patients might benefit from changes to their care.

You can learn more about this in the [Rapid Learning Animation](#).

How will I be involved / what activities will I take part in?

What is the People's Forum and what will we do as part of it?

The People's Forum is a three-day event bringing together patients, carers and members of the public to co-create a People's Charter for Rapid Learning in the NHS. The Forum will build on learning from the RAPID-RT study

The final Charter will reflect people's views and help shape how rapid learning is used in future NHS decisions.

What will happen on each day of the Forum?

Day 1 Thursday 6 November 2025 10.30am- 4.30pm

Introductions, meeting each other and the research team, learning about how we'll be working together using a participatory democracy approach, hearing from researchers and people with lived experience, reflecting on key themes, hopes and concerns.

Day 2 Thursday 20 November 2025 10.30am - 4.30pm

Exploring themes in more depth with expert input and group discussions.

Day 3 Thursday 4 December 2025 10.30am - 4.30pm

Bringing everything together and agree shared principles and priorities for the Charter.

You do not need to have any prior knowledge. All information will be presented in plain language, with time for you to ask any questions and to reflect and share your views reflection.

For more information, to say hello and ask any questions, please see the Padlet: [People's Forum - Padlet](#). You're welcome to post using your first name only, but if you're comfortable sharing your full name, feel free to do so.

What do I need to bring on the day?

Please bring your willingness to listen to others, share your thoughts and your confidence! Lunch and refreshments are provided, as are notebooks and pens.

Who will be attending the event?

Around 30 people will take part, including patients, carers, members of the public, and professionals. The Vocal team and research staff will also be present to support you and answer questions.

Practical information about the event

Refreshments

A sandwich lunch will be provided between 12.15 and 1pm. There will be a further break at in the afternoon at 2.15pm. Cake will be served during the final break of the afternoon. Tea, coffee and water will be available throughout. If you have dietary requirements, please contact Lissie (elisabeth.fahey@mft.nhs.uk)

Payment and expenses

You will receive **£150 per day** in recognition of your time (a total of £450 for all three days). Payment will be sent automatically once you have registered your details and after your attendance at the sessions. This can take 4–6 weeks. Payment is optional, so please let Lissie know if you do not wish to accept it.

Registering for payment

If you haven't already done so, please fill out the online [form](#) to register your bank details.

If you would prefer to register on the phone, please call Lissie on 07483 130252.

Travel expenses

We will reimburse reasonable travel expenses from within Greater Manchester. Please keep any tickets or receipts. If you are driving, we can pay mileage at 42p per mile

(calculated using Google Maps from your home address to the venue). This will be capped at £20. If your travel is expected to cost more, please get in touch with Lissie.

Accessibility

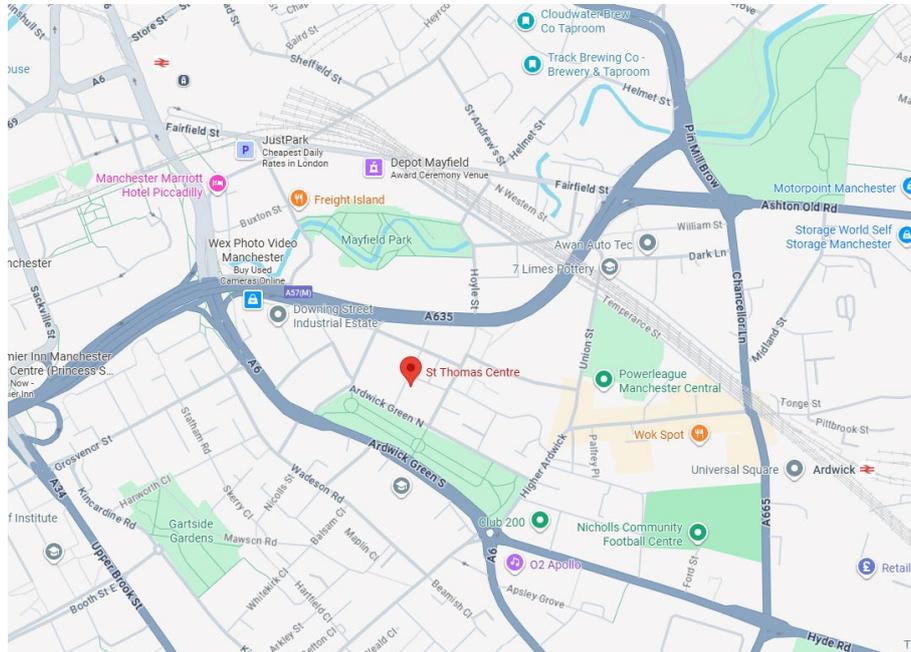
Everyone is welcome at our event, and we aim to be inclusive in our work. Lissie, our Wellbeing Support Lead, will be available throughout the day to offer support. If there is anything that would help you take part, such as an interpreter, support with hearing or sight, or more information about the day, please get in touch as soon as soon as possible so we can explore what will work best for you. We will also have sensory items and a quiet space available for anyone who might find them helpful.

Children are welcome to attend the event, and we'll have craft activities and/or toys. However, please note that we are unable to supervise children during the day. If you plan to bring children, do let us know in advance so we can make any necessary arrangements to help you feel comfortable.

The room is on the ground floor. Both the venue itself and the hall have step-free access via a ramp and a lift respectively.

Getting to the Venue

The venue is on Ardwick Green (M12 6FZ).



By Train

The nearest train station is **Manchester Piccadilly**. The venue is around a 10–15 minute walk from the station. Taxis are available from the Fairfield Street exit, or you can take a short bus journey towards Ardwick.

By Bus

Several buses run from the city centre and stop close to Ardwick Green. From Piccadilly Gardens, services towards Ardwick and Longsight stop within a few minutes' walk of the venue.

By Car

There is limited, unreserved parking for Blue Badge holders on site. There is **on-street parking directly outside the venue**. Spaces are limited and cannot be reserved, so please allow extra time to park. There are also paid car parks nearby, including those at Manchester Piccadilly Station and on Fairfield Street (10 minutes' walk).

Please read the **Working Together** section before 6 November 2025. If you have any other questions about Vocal, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Hannah (Hannah.Turner-Uaandja@mft.nhs.uk) or Lissie (Elisabeth.Fahey@mft.nhs.uk).

We're looking forward to working with you!



Working Together

We want to make sure that a range of people have a say in our research strategies, projects and making sure our work is accountable, transparent, and relevant to the public. Please take a moment to read through our Working Together policy.

Aims

- support approaches and activities that involve people in research
- identify and prioritise topics for research
- design and comment on research plans, protocols, and materials
- identify and facilitate ways that patients/members of the public are involved in research
- disseminate research results
- support researchers to assess the impact of involvement in their work

Confidentiality

We believe in openness and transparency. However, there are important considerations in terms of confidentiality when you are working with us.

We ask group members to respect each other's privacy and confidentiality by not discussing or sharing the personal experiences of other members outside of meetings. Research projects and documents are usually confidential, and we ask you not to share or discuss these outside of group activities, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

We will take notes at meetings and sometimes record meetings. These recordings are not shared outside of the project team. Sometimes, we'll include quotes from our notes or recordings of the meetings in reports, but we don't attribute comments to people by name.

You can ask to view the data we have about you or ask for data to be amended or removed at any time by emailing us at vocal@mft.nhs.uk. Unless you request otherwise, we will keep the data that you provide to us in our database for a period of three years and then will get in touch to see if you're happy to give your consent to keep your information for another three years. We will never pass your information on to a third party without your explicit written permission. For more information, please see our [privacy policy](#) on our website.

Accountability and Responsibilities

This is a voluntary event, and we expect members to be kind to each other – we're all here with a common aim, to help improve health research for everyone.

If we feel anyone is being disrespectful, we will ask them to leave the event. If you have any concerns, please report these to Hannah or Lissie.

The following will not be tolerated:

- discussing topics of an offensive, discriminatory or inappropriate nature
- continually discussing irrelevant topics
- swearing
- any form of bullying

Frequently Asked Questions

What is your policy on diversity and inclusion?

Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of Vocal's work. We're part of a passionate, diverse, and vibrant community with a shared mission to create opportunities for people to have a voice in and make a real difference to the future of health and research. We're committed to building an inclusive culture of research involvement and engagement. We fully embrace and value diversity and respect individual differences and the unique contributions that individuals bring to our work.

We're passionate about working with people who might have been excluded or have previously not had opportunities to have a say in health research. Addressing health inequalities in research is a pressing concern for all the people we work with – researchers and communities alike. By working with researchers and communities to make health research more inclusive, we've strengthened the strategic focus of Manchester's clinical research toward addressing inequalities, co-producing training on inclusive research and including more diverse voices in the development of research. We want to support everyone's participation in our activities, please let us know how we can support your participation.

How much will I get paid for taking part?

The [National Institute for Health Research](#) sets out the following rates for honorarium payments:

- £150 for involvement in all-day meetings.

These are 'honorarium' payments. This does not mean that you have an on-going contract of employment. You are not obliged to accept an honorarium payment. If you are receiving state benefits, any payment, and expenses to you may affect your benefit claim. A Benefits Advice Service is provided by NIHR nationally through the [Centre for Engagement and Dissemination's website](#), and is open to members of the public who are involved in, or considering involvement in research with the NIHR.

What is the process for getting paid?

Once you have filled in a BACS form with your bank details, we will send it to the Accounts Payable team at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust. The Finance team then organise payment directly into your account. This can take up to 4-6 weeks. If it takes any longer than this, please contact Lissie and we'll follow this up for you. For more information, see our [Vocal Payment Policy](#)

What happens if I can't attend a session?

- You will be paid after attending each session
- If you can't attend a session that is fine, but we cannot extend payments to sessions that have not been attended.

Can I still get involved if I have childcare/carer responsibilities?

Yes. Please let us know what support you need and feel free to chat to us about this and where possible we will help you to take part.

Why do you ask for personal information?

You'll complete a form with information about yourself when you join. This information is for our records only and is kept confidential. We ask for this information as it helps us to understand more about the people we work with and helps us work to our aim of ensuring that people from a diverse range of backgrounds have a say in health research. We will never pass on your information to a third party without your explicit written permission. For more information, please see our [privacy policy](#) on our website.

What do I do if I'm finding it hard to talk about and share some of my experiences?

Your wellbeing is the most important thing to us. We understand that sometimes, sharing your experiences about your health can bring up strong emotions. If you're finding that it's difficult to take part in these activities, please talk to Lissie in confidence. You can discuss together what they can put in place to support you, or they will refer you to other services that can help.

What if I have a complaint?

If you would like to raise an issue or have a complaint about Vocal or our work, please initially raise this with your Vocal contact who will work with you to resolve the issue. If this is not appropriate, please contact the Vocal Director (Interim) Annie Keane;

Annie.Keane@mft.nhs.uk

**Everyone can
influence
research for a
better,
healthier future**

 @letsgetvocal

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