

OPEN RESEARCH FOR P

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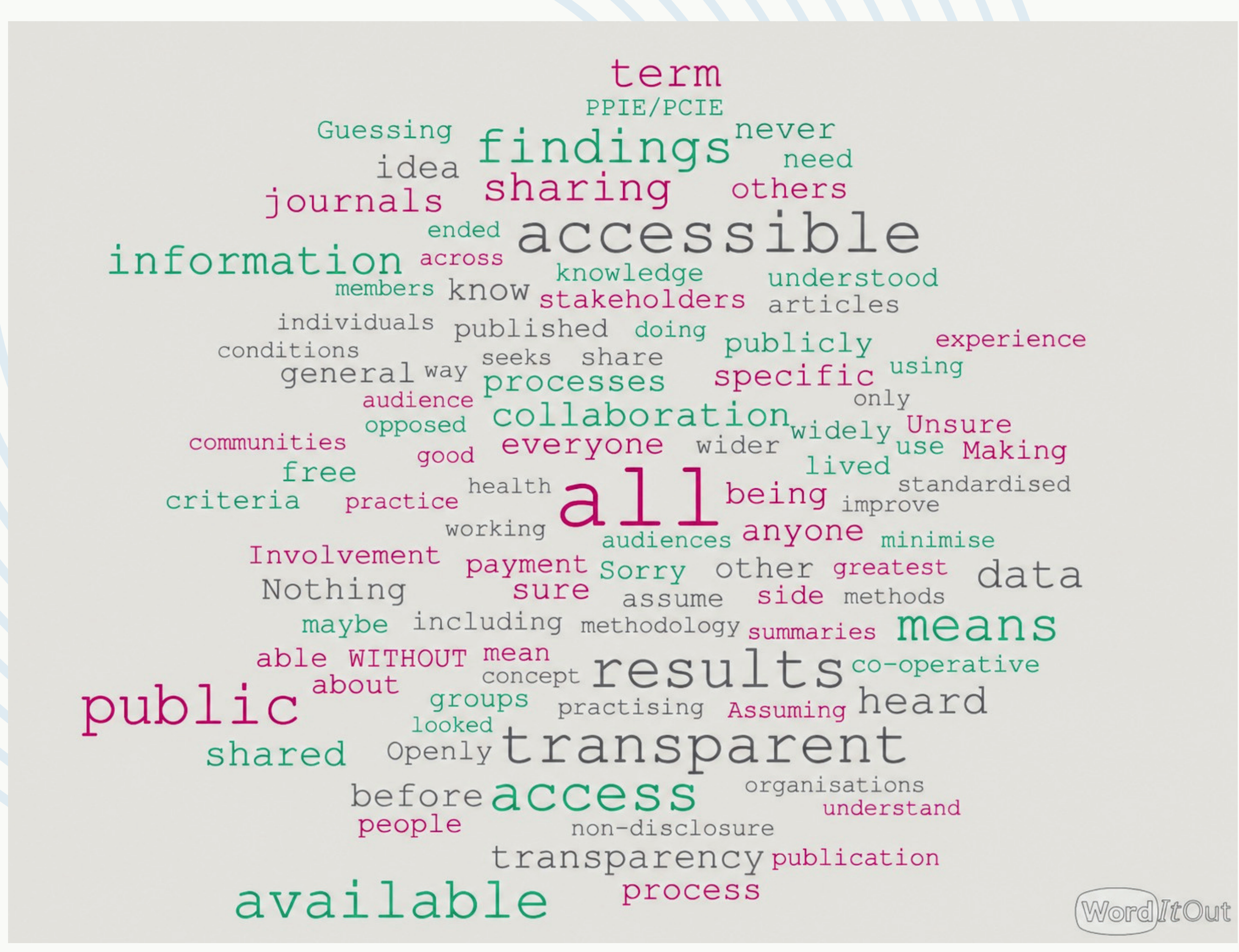


Figure 1. A word cloud of how public contributors described what “open research” means to them.

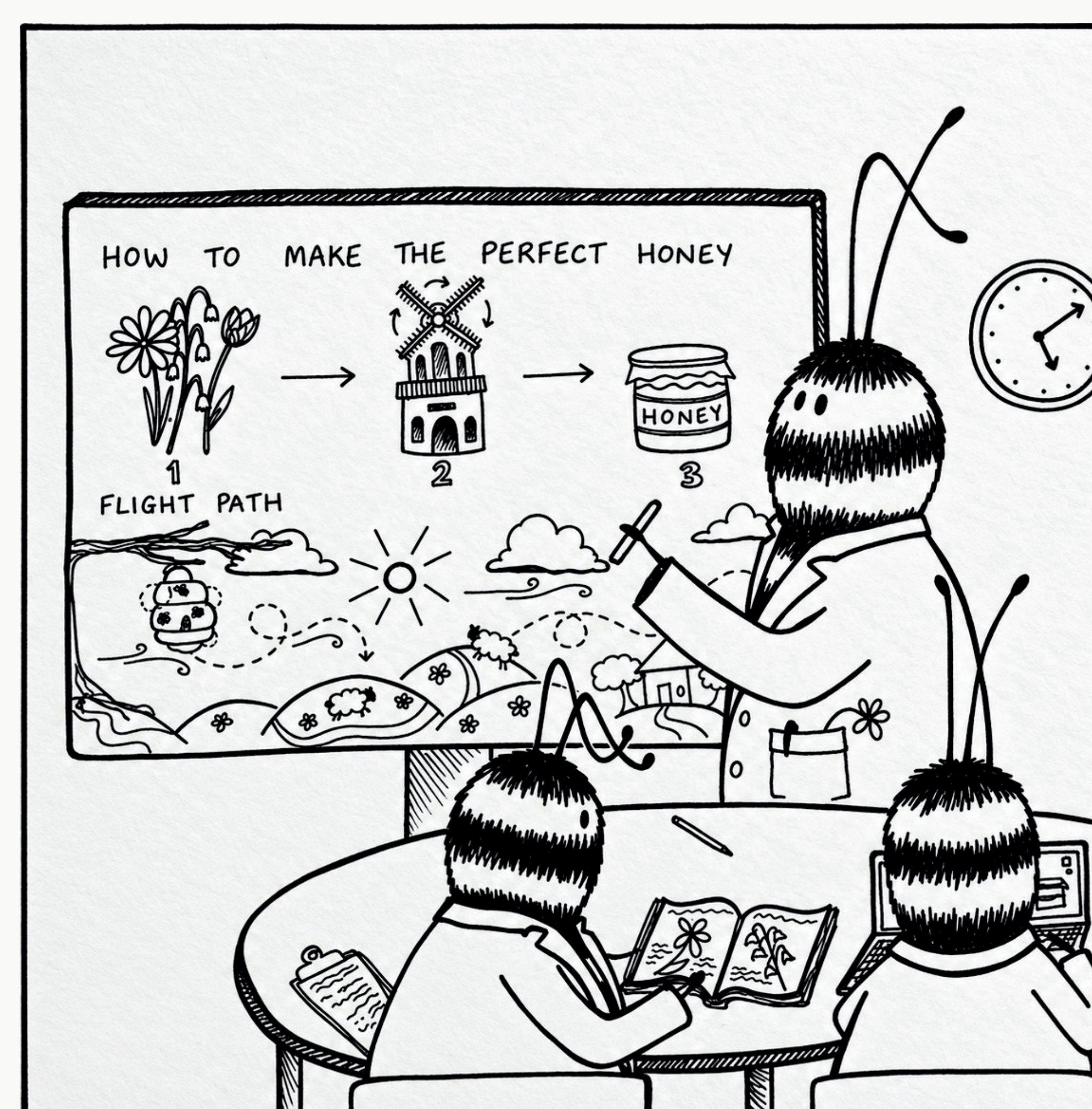


Figure 2. Example of illustrations being developed by artist Jane Morrissey for the online training about open research. They use the analogy of the bee expecting another bee to know how to make honey, without explaining the steps.

Open research means that researchers use certain practices (or strategies) to be transparent about every step of their research. One practice is involving public contributors with relevant lived experience in shaping research (sometimes called co-production or patient and public involvement).

Public contributors are often given some general training about research, but we wanted to find out if they know (or would like to know) about open research. We ran a survey designed with the help of contributors with lived experience. The 64 participants who completed the survey were public contributors passionate about the benefits of co-production. Although the term ‘open research’ was unfamiliar to most, when we introduced them to the practices through stories, they found them familiar and important.

Most felt that they learnt from the survey and were interested to learn more, with some practices being less well understood. They also thought that open research was relevant to their role. One said “I will now look out for the practices described and where I don’t see them, I will ask ‘why not?’”. We found out there is a need and an opportunity to share information about open research with those who contribute their lived experience to research.

We are currently developing an online training resource to explain different Open Research practices to public contributors which will be hosted on the University of Manchester website. The stories and definitions made for the survey, as well as comments made in the survey are feeding into the training.

The stories we created about different open research practices have been published within our journal article and other researchers are interested to use them to explain open research in their teaching and training.

The training we are developing will be made openly available online, for sharing by researchers and charities working with public contributors. They may also be useful in wider teaching about open research. Ultimately, we to encourage more projects to embrace Open Research by researchers and public contributors being better informed. This should lead to more sharing of resources and progress in research.

The survey findings and stories have been published as a journal article:

Poliakoff E, Shepherd H, Bai Y, Pickering J, Ferrett A, Baimbridge P, Hanks G, Gowen E (in press) What do public contributors with lived experience know and think about open research? “Nobody should look at results and think ‘how did they arrive at that?’ [Included in British Psychological Society Landmark Issue on Coproduced Research]

Pre-registration (Example plain English summary and vignette)

Summary “Before starting to collect or look at data, researchers should document (“pre-register”) what their research questions or hypotheses are. They should also give details about exactly how the data will be analysed to answer the question(s) or prove or disprove their hypotheses. This means that others can be more confident in their findings.”

Story “William carries out a research project testing whether perception of musical notes is affected in autistic adults. He writes down his hypotheses (predictions) about which musical tasks will be affected. He publishes a plan of his hypotheses, what tasks he will use, how he will check the quality of the data and what statistical tests he will use to conclude whether music perception is affected. This means that other researchers can see that he has carried out his research as planned to test his hypotheses and not changed his mind after starting.”

Figure 3. Definition and story to illustrate an open research practice.