

Welcome to Patient and Public Involvement at the Centre for Academic Primary Care, University of Bristol.

Together we can make a difference

Thank you for your interest in getting involved with our research!



We work with patients and the public to make sure our research on primary care focuses on what really matters to people and communities.

Primary care is **healthcare in the community** - everything from GPs to pharmacists, opticians, and dentists. At the Centre for Academic Primary Care (CAPC), we do research that aims to **make primary care better for everyone**. Since our goal is improving care for everyone, it's best that **everyone** is involved.

Getting involved in research is different from taking part in a study or trial. Instead of being a research participant, **you are part of the research team, helping to shape and guide the study from a public perspective.** We call people who do this 'public contributors'.

As a public contributor, your **opinion and your experience really matter.** Your views could **guide** research, **influence** future treatments and **improve** services for patients and the public.

What can you do as a public contributor?

- Share your experiences of primary care, an illness or health condition – which either affects you or someone you care for
- Tell us how you and the people you know feel about a health issue
- Give feedback to researchers about their ideas
- Suggest new research topics
- Help design projects that are most relevant
- Advise on the wording and images used in leaflets for people taking part in research
- Join a research management or advisory group
- Help interpret research results
- Make sure our research reports are easy to read by different audiences
- Help spread the word about our research results.



[This short animation shows](#) what primary care research is about and how you can be involved.

Why be a public contributor?

Here are some examples of what motivates our public contributors to get involved:

Louise said: 'I think that the public needs to have a voice in the research that's actually meant to be benefiting them'

Diana said: 'I still have my condition, but my experiences and other people's experiences can help to change things. I know what we do makes a difference, maybe not to my health, but to someone else's, to future generations. To be able to be part of that journey by being involved is an amazing thing to do.'

Barnaby said: 'I really enjoy being a public contributor. I have learnt so much about research, met great people from all walks of life and been involved in interesting projects. I really felt listened to and pleased that my views have helped shape the research projects. It is rewarding to know that my experiences can help change treatments and as a student the extra money and skills for my CV are a bonus.'

Other public contributors told us:

- 'I wanted to turn a negative experience into something positive'
- 'We all pay for healthcare through tax so we should all have say in how it works'
- 'We could tell the researchers what we thought would work in the real world'

Who can get involved?

Anyone of any age with an interest in healthcare research can join our panel of people willing to get involved in research. We already have over 130 people signed up. [You can sign up here.](#) You don't need to have done anything like this before, and you **don't need any qualifications** to get involved. It works best with a range of individuals and experiences. **We want to hear from everyone**, regardless of age, background, religion or culture.

What research can you get involved in?

At CAPC, we carry out research in many areas, including:

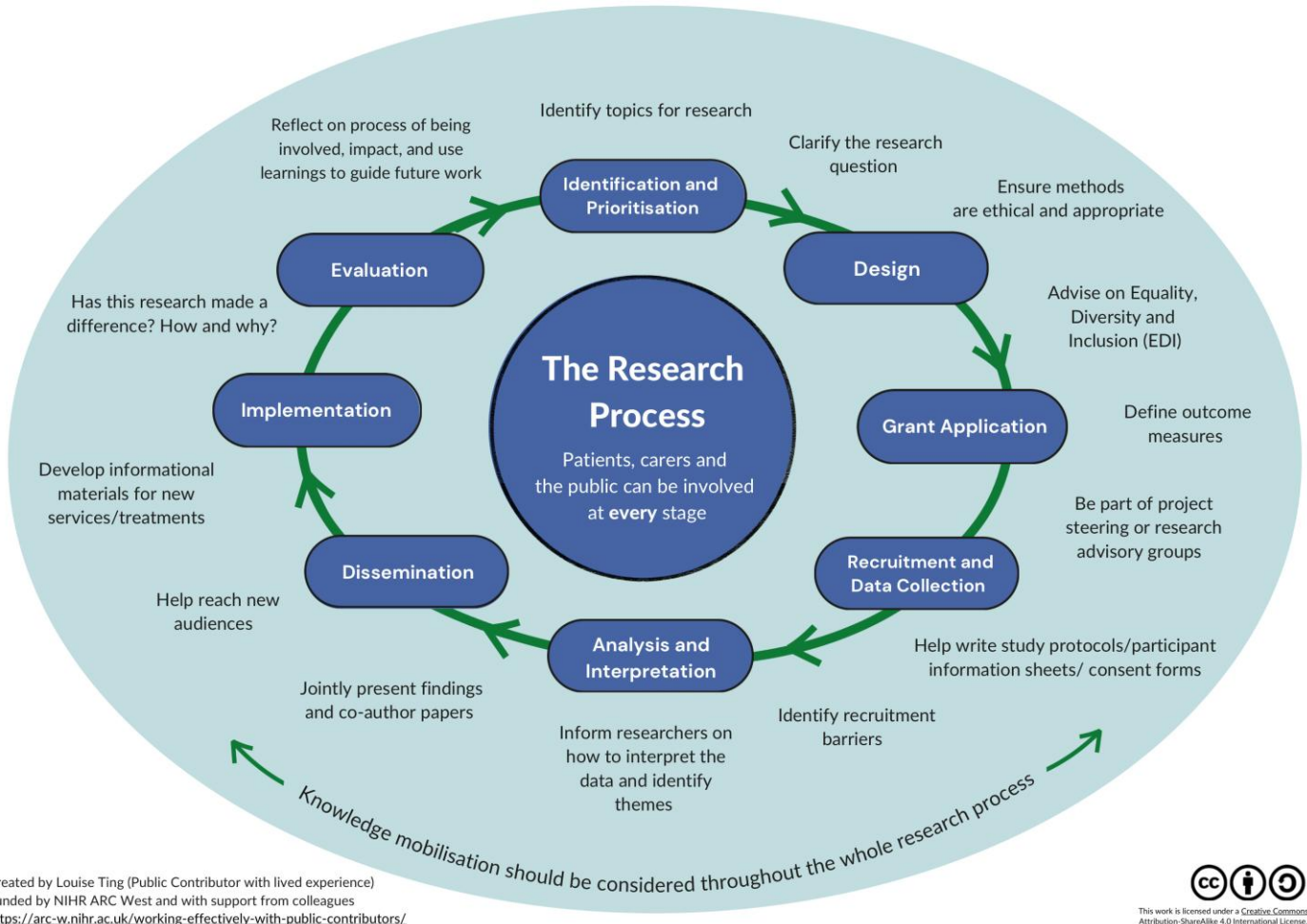
- Finding out what causes health problems in later life
- Helping people with long-term health conditions (like heart disease, mental health and dementia) to keep well for longer and improve their quality of life
- Help patients take the right medication for their condition, and find ways to improve medication management for those with multiple conditions
- Finding better treatments for common problems such as infections (like coughs and colds), eczema, shingles and musculoskeletal problems
- Building relationships to support users of primary health care, including from under-represented communities
- Developing new ways of providing better health care
- Improving the healthcare response to domestic violence and abuse, so that professionals can best support survivors, their children, and those providing informal support.



What stages of the research can you be involved in?

Public contributors can be involved in all stages of research, from initial ideas and helping to **choose, design** and **shape** the project, to making sure **results are widely shared**.

Louise Ting, a long-term public contributor with us here at CAPC [developed this diagram](#) showing many of the ways in which the public can get involved in research.



Our projects can last from a few months to several years. You may be involved in one part of a project or throughout the whole study.

You may be asked to share your views on the research idea, help review funding applications or documents to make sure they are clear, and attend meetings.

If a project is funded, you might join an Advisory Group to help guide the study. Some people also choose to be involved in management or steering groups, which usually involve more time and responsibility.

However you choose to be involved, **your views are valuable**. Your experience and perspective may bring ideas or suggestions that researchers have not previously considered.

How much time does it take?

The time commitment varies from project to project and can be short-term or ongoing, depending on the activity. Some roles are one-off and will take an hour or two, such as reviewing documents, testing a survey, or attending a single meeting. Others involve regular involvement over months or years, for example being part of an advisory group where meetings may take place every three or six months, usually lasting one to two hours, with some additional contact in between.

What if you want to stop being involved?

Taking part is always your choice, and you are free to reduce or stop your involvement at any time.

Who will support you to be involved?

Our Public Involvement and Engagement Coordinator, Alisha Newman, shares involvement opportunities and can provide advice and support to both public contributors and the research teams they work with. Once a project is underway, a member of the research team will usually be your main point of contact. They will explain the project, the involvement opportunity, what your role will be, the expected time commitment, and whether payment or expenses are offered. They can also discuss with you any additional support you may need to take part. If at any point you would prefer to ask a question or raise a concern with someone who is more independent from the project, you are very welcome to contact Alisha at any time. Her contact details are at the end of this document.

Here's a picture of some of our research team:



Is there any training available?

This Public Collaborator [Training & Development Booklet](#) brings together a range of training and support opportunities designed to build confidence, knowledge, and skills for patient and public involvement. You can also talk to the research team you're involved with about training opportunities.

Where will the involvement opportunity take place?

Some opportunities allow you to take part from home. If you are asked to attend a meeting, this may be held online using Teams or Zoom. In-person meetings may take place at the University of Bristol or at a local community location, or elsewhere in the UK for studies that are national or UK-wide.

Will you get paid?

We usually offer a thank-you payment in recognition of your time, skills and expertise. We also cover reasonable travel expenses for in-person meetings. If you are a carer, we might be able help with the cost of replacement care during the involvement activity. What we are able to offer depends on the funding source and budget for each project.

Many of our projects offer thank you payment of £25–£27.50 per hour of involvement activity. But occasionally, opportunities may be unpaid or offer a lesser amount. This is most often the case where the research is being carried out by a PhD student.

This [payment guidance](#) is for members of the public who are considering active involvement in research and may be offered expenses, payment for involvement, or both. It answers some frequently asked questions and suggests where you can get advice based on your individual circumstances.

How do you sign up to be a CAPC public contributor?

If you'd like to receive emails about our research involvement opportunities, please complete our [sign up form](#).

Where can you get further information?

Get information about our research by signing up to our [newsletter](#), visiting our [website](#) and following us on [Bluesky](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

For more information about public involvement in general, visit: [For the public — NIHR School for Primary Care Research](#)

Who should you contact?



If you have a question or concern, please get in touch with Alisha Newman, Public Involvement and Engagement Coordinator:

Email: capc-ppi@bristol.ac.uk

Telephone: 0117 455 9129.

Our address is: Centre for Academic Primary Care, Population Health Sciences, Bristol Medical School, University of Bristol, Canynge Hall, 39 Whatley Road, Bristol, BS8 2PS.

Thank You

Thank you for considering getting involved in research at the Centre for Academic Primary Care. We look forward to working with you!

We would also like to extend special thanks to public contributors Tom Yardley, Christina Stokes, and Louise Ting, as well as Sonia Newman and colleagues at the University of Southampton Primary Care Research Centre, for their valuable contributions to the development of this welcome document.