

Healthy Reproductive Years

Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) in Research Information Sheet

Thank you for your interest in helping with this research.

'Personal and Public involvement (PPI) in research' means that members of the public become actively involved in shaping and driving research. This information sheet will give you some background information on our research and will explain what the role of a PPI representative would be. We would like to recruit a panel of PPI representatives to help us with this study. We are looking for adults in their reproductive years (aged between 18-45 years) who are willing to share their views on the preconception period. We particularly welcome involvement from individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds and underrepresented groups. We are keen to hear from anyone who might consider conceiving a baby in the future or who has conceived a baby within the past five years.

Background information on the project

We have obtained funding from the Department for the Economy (DfE) to investigate preconception health in Northern Ireland (NI).

The preconception period is a crucial life stage for health promotion. People's health before conceiving a pregnancy can help establish the foundation for successful pregnancies, improve pregnancy outcomes and prevent chronic diseases for both the child and the mother in the short and long term. It is crucial to address preconception health, because many modifiable risk factors are still common in adults, including heavy alcohol consumption, smoking, unhealthy dietary habits and lack of physical activity. Other risk factors include long term physical and mental health conditions.

First phase of our study:

In Northern Ireland, routine health and social care information is collected from all pregnant women and stored on an electronic records system called the NI MATernity System (NIMATS). Information is recorded a few times during pregnancy and at the delivery of the baby about women's health shortly before and during pregnancy, their lifestyle, any health conditions and medications. This project will utilise these records to identify and understand the prevalence of preconception health behaviours and risk factors in NI and explore how they link with pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Ultimately, this work will help determine the population's preconception needs and improve patient care and healthcare services, thus improving outcomes for parents, their offspring and future generations. Moreover, this first study, and future planned studies in this area will inform and evaluate new targeted campaigns and interventions, and enhance accountability from governments and other agencies to improve preconception health and preconception health care services.

Why is PPI needed?

PPI is really important to research because it helps to make sure that the way we conduct our research is acceptable to our target group. Importantly, we want PPI representatives to be equals in our research process, where we can listen to your experiences and ideas about health in the preconception period, to help give context and improve our research and any outcomes.

While the analysis of healthcare data is an integral part of characterising the wider picture of preconception health in NI, there is also a need to understand what the public currently think and feel regarding preconception health, in order to successfully intervene in this area and develop relevant research. Making sure the way we frame our research is acceptable to the public is another important aspect of PPI.

What would you do as PPI representative?

The PPI representatives for this study would be asked to give their opinion on materials we produce for our research or consulted about study procedures we plan to use (e.g., whether they are relevant to you and whether the language used is acceptable). We also welcome your suggestions on how we could shape our research in this area, to make it more relevant to you and improve its impact.

More examples of ways PPI representatives may be involved in this research are given below. You can be involved in all or just some activities depending on what suits you. We are flexible as we appreciate you may be busy and that other commitments might get in the way of PPI activities.

Person specification

Ideally, the PPI representatives will be individuals who wish to share their views on preconception the preconception phase (e.g., individuals who are not actively trying but may wish to conceive at some point in the future, are actively planning a pregnancy, have successfully conceived, have become parents in the past five years). We are looking for males, females, transgender and non-binary adults. No prior experience of being a PPI representative or being involved in a research project is required.

Your role and responsibilities as a PPI representative

Examples of the type of activity the PPI representatives may be asked to do are:

- Review study materials.
- Provide opinions on the wording used in research materials.
- Attend project meetings (in-person, email, phone communication, online meetings etc.).
- Contribute to general discussions in meetings on the topic and share your experiences.
- Join as co-applicants on our research proposals

Reimbursements

You will be reimbursed for your involvement and any travel expense will also be covered, as detailed below. You will be paid by bank transfer or cheque by Queen's University Belfast.

Travel	Payment
Car	40p per mile for the first 50 miles and then 23p per mile for rest of the journey.
Car Parking	Reimbursed if original receipts/parking tickets are provided.
Public transport	Reimbursed if original receipts are provided.
Activity	Payment
For involvement in a task or activity such as reading and commenting on an abstract which equates to less than half an hour.	£12.50
Involvement in a brief task or activity which requires little or no preparation, such as, participating in short teleconference or reviewing a brief document, for example, leaflet or information card.	£25
Involvement in a task or activity which requires some preparation. For example, a short (30 min-1 hour) teleconference, with papers to read in advance or reviewing a long document (50 pages).	£50
Involvement in task or activity which is half a day long, for example, 2-3 hours teleconference and papers to read in advance.	£75

If you are interested in helping us by becoming a PPI representative for this area of research, please let us know by calling or texting +44 7561833305 or emailing e.cassinelli01@qub.ac.uk and we can arrange a phone call to discuss.