



**This information pack covers everything you need to know about our Public Committee member roles.**

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## What is the NIHR

The National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR), funded by the Department of Health and social care, funds health, public health and social care research that leads to improved health and outcomes for patients and the public, and makes the health and social care system more efficient, effective and safe. We work closely with people and organisations across the health and social care system to ensure we address the challenges they face and respond to their research needs.

NIHR's research is shaped by working with patients, service users, carers and communities. People contribute at every stage of the research pathway. We are determined that people's perspectives and experiences are heard, and that their contributions are valued and recognised.

If you want to find out more about how our work is influencing care, and making a positive difference to people, and the economy, go to:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/our-impact/making-a-difference-stories.htm>

*'The National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR) funds health and social care research. But for someone like me with lived experience of a range of health issues, NIHR is an organisation that works to make my, and many other people's lives healthier and longer. It's an organisation that not only funds research but creates a space for cooperation, learning, and innovation based on what matters to patients and their loved ones.'*

**Hayley Hall, NIHR Public Committee Member**

## What does a NIHR committee do

NIHR committees help decide which research to prioritise and which research projects to fund. Our committees help to ensure that research is high quality, robust, and represents good value for money. It also needs to be relevant to the needs of our diverse society.

Committees usually consist of around 20-30 members who have a broad range of perspectives, knowledge, skills and experience. They include NHS clinicians and practitioners, academics, local government decision makers, and members of the public. The public members will bring the perspective of patients, service users, carers and anyone affected by a research topic.

There are different types of committees depending on the role they need to play:

**Prioritisation committees** read research briefs. These research briefs give detailed background information about a potentially important research topic. The committee will assess the briefs and discuss the importance and the need for the proposed research topic.

They will decide which research topics to prioritise.

**Programme Oversight committees** are responsible for overseeing and approving commissioning briefs recommended for research by the Prioritisation Committees.

**Funding committees** critically assess research proposals from Researchers applying for funding and decide which research to recommend for funding.

## Who can apply

We are looking for members of the public who have a broad interest in, and knowledge of, health, social care and/or improving public health and addressing health inequalities.

You do not need to have a scientific background to help shape research. We are looking for people who can bring their own experiences to improve the research we wish to fund.

Membership is open to people from across the United Kingdom. We welcome applications from all sections of the community. So that we can encourage more people to get involved in our opportunities, public members can only serve on 1 committee at a time. You also cannot apply for the same committee that you have previously served on.

If you are unsure about whether you are eligible to apply, please contact our Patient and Public Involvement team on [publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk)

## What experience and skills do you need

Your application will be assessed against the criteria listed below.

You will need to:

- consider the health needs and priorities of people from different backgrounds and assess how well each research proposal meets these needs
- clearly communicate and share your feedback and thoughts constructively with a group of people
- confidently and constructively participate in meetings and group discussions
- listen to and respect different opinions
- understand, review and summarise information from long documents
- meet deadlines
- be computer literate and have access to an IT device

Ideally you will have:

- experience as a member of a committee or group, such as a student or neighbourhood committee, youth council, book club etc.
- knowledge and/or experience of patient and public involvement in health and social care services research, such as reviewing an application, working with researchers, being part of a research study etc.

## What does the role involve

We will send you research proposals and ask for your comments on areas such as:

- the importance and relevance of the research
- whether the research is inclusive of a diverse population
- improvements that the researcher could make

Every research proposal comes with a summary of the research written in plain English, to help you understand and assess it.

You will be expected to:

- prepare for committee meetings by reviewing research proposals and noting down your comments
- attend committee meetings and take part in discussions
- present your comments on research proposals and help the committee decide which ones should be funded and/or prioritised
- provide feedback on documents between meetings

## How much time is involved

As a public committee member it is important that you are available for committee meetings.

Some committees meet up to 4 times per year. All committee members will be given an annual schedule of the meetings and pre-meeting work in good time.

Meetings usually last for 1 to 2 full day(s) and are held on weekdays.

The workload varies between committees. All committees require a number of hours of preparation to review paperwork in the lead up to each meeting. For new members, the preparation time for your first meeting may take a little longer.

Committee membership is initially for 3 years, with a possibility of extending for a further 2 years.

Committee meetings can take place online or in person.

# What's in it for you

*'Contributing to the NIHR provides public contributors with the opportunity to participate and help influence research from the early days of a researcher's career to the most advanced level of research, helping to ensure that the outcome of such research is public oriented and developed with the public.'*

**Sue Prior, NIHR Public Committee Members**

Joining a committee as a member of the public is very rewarding. It is a great opportunity to:

- influence the research we fund, how research is conducted, and how it impacts on diverse communities
- develop your knowledge on health and social care research, connecting you to more opportunities to get further involved in research
- develop skills in public speaking, assessing and providing constructive feedback, and collaborative working
- access relevant training, for example how to review a research funded application
- network and build relationships with a wide range of people

## Recognition payments and expenses

As a public member you will be offered [payment for their involvement in the committees](#). The amount will depend on the type and volume of work involved. This will always be clarified ahead of a meeting. You do not have to accept payment if you do not wish to.

You can also claim reasonable expenses in connection with your attendance at committee meetings. For example, money towards travel, food and drink, accommodation, childcare, carer costs, personal assistant costs, postage and printing costs. On request, our staff members can book travel for you directly so that you do not have to pay these costs in advance.

In person committee meetings always include refreshments throughout the day, and lunch.

## Learning, development and support

We understand the importance of continuous learning and development, and will support you throughout your time with us.

When you first join a committee you will have a detailed induction programme. We will also share helpful resources with you, such as:

- **A free online interactive course for public contributors:**  
<https://www.learningforinvolvement.org.uk/an-interactive-course-for-new-and-experienced-patient-public-reviewers-of-health-and-social-care-research/>

- **Everything you wanted to know about being a public committee member video:**  
<https://youtu.be/-Tyak1rctb0>

You will not be expected to do anything at your very first committee meeting. You will join as an observer, which will give you an opportunity to meet other committee members and see the group at work before actively contributing to it.

New members will also have a 'buddy'. A 'buddy' is another member of the committee who has volunteered to take on this role. They are there to give you some additional, informal support (usually by phone or email) for your first few meetings.

## Which committees could you apply to join

We are looking for new members of the public to join one of the following NIHR Research Programme Committees:

- **NIHR Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme Oversight Committee (POC) and Funding Committee.** This Programme funds research on the clinical and cost effectiveness of healthcare treatments and tests. For example, finding out whether one treatment is better than another in the NHS. **Read more here:**  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/health-technology-assessment.htm>

The Programme is recruiting for 2 committees. For the POC Committee, public members should have an excellent understanding of the NIHR and the research funding pathway. For this reason, this role is only open to those who have previously sat on an NIHR Research Funding Committee. For the Funding Committee role, you don't need to have sat on an NIHR committee before.

- **NIHR Health and Social Care Delivery Research (HSDR) Funding Committee.** This Programme funds research on the quality, accessibility and organisation of health services. For example, the best way to deliver care – how, where, when, and by whom – in the NHS and social care. **Read more here:**  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/health-and-social-care-delivery-research.htm>
- **NIHR Population Health Career Scientist Award Committee.** This committee is a UK-wide initiative to support independent researchers who are emerging as future leaders in research. It focuses on the wider determinants of health. **Read more here:**  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/nihr-population-health-career-scientist-award-specification-document-2024/35235>

If you are not sure which committee you would like to apply for, let us know. Please email [publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk) and we can help you choose which committee might suit you best.

# How to apply

Please download and complete an application form from our website:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/about-us/committees/public-committee-member-application-form.docx>

The deadline for applications is **midnight on Sunday 28th April 2024**.

Please return the completed application form by emailing: [publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk)  
If you will not be able to submit your application by email, please let us know.

## Next steps

We will consider applications where your knowledge and experience best match the skills and expertise we are looking for. If we shortlist your application, we will invite you to an interview to get to know you better and discuss your application further, before deciding on who to offer the role to.

Interviews will be conducted online or by phone. The interview dates are listed in the application form. If you are not able to attend on the date listed, please contact us before submitting your application, so that we can advise you further.

## Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive culture by having committees and panels that are made up of diverse skills and experiences. We want everyone to realise their full potential and be empowered to make a positive contribution. We encourage applications from people from all backgrounds and communities. To find out more about equality, diversity and inclusion at NIHR please visit our [website](#).

As part of our recruitment process, you will be asked to complete an anonymous equality monitoring form. After the closing date, you will receive an email from our Equality and Diversity Recording System (EDRS2) asking you to complete the form. It is not mandatory to complete this form, but the more information you provide, the more useful our monitoring will be. The information you give will not be used to make decisions about your application, and will never be published in a way that allows you to be identified. Full information about how we will use data will be included in the email.

By answering our equality monitoring questions, you will help us understand the different groups of people that apply to us as public contributors – particularly the groups protected by UK equality legislation (The Equality Act 2010). The data allows us to monitor trends in who applies and who is successful across NIHR, and identify where barriers exist in our systems. Only by collecting this information can we better plan initiatives which address any barriers or biases on the basis of an individual's identity.

We also welcome feedback on how we can make our recruitment more inclusive. Please contact the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) team on [publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk) with any feedback.

## Accessibility

We will try our best to make reasonable adjustments to remove any barriers to this post in the application/interview process.

These include, but are not limited to:

- discussing the possibility of asking a friend, family member or other advocate to complete the application form on your behalf
- offering you a phone conversation where key points for the application can be written up for you
- providing the application form in bigger print, and/or on different colour paper

Our committee adverts clearly outline:

- the role description, person specification, and the knowledge, experience, skills and commitment required
- the expectations placed on committee members, for example involvement and participation in meetings and the task involved
- the limitations of the support we can offer, for example limiting transcription phone calls to one hour, at a designated date and time

If you would like to request reasonable adjustments, you will need to request this 7 days before the closing date for any application.

## How to contact us

If you would like more information or guidance on this opportunity please contact us by emailing: [publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:publicrecruitment@nihr.ac.uk)