NIHR | School for Public Health Research

NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) Public Advisory Network (PAN)

Terms of Reference

This document has been co-produced by the SPHR Public Advisory Network (PAN) and the SPHR Involvement Operations Group.

For other formats, please contact Rachel Proctor at r.h.proctor@exeter.ac.uk to discuss your requirements.

Purpose of the group

The purpose of the SPHR Public Advisory Network (PAN) is to help shape SPHR research and improve Public Health outcomes in England.

As a PAN partner, you may do different types of work. This can include:

- Helping SPHR research by supporting the involvement strategy (how people are involved in research).
- Giving advice and feedback so research has more impact.
- Supporting meaningful involvement of people in Public Health research.
- Representing the public in executive meetings, research review panels, and advisory board meetings.
- Sharing your views on research design, especially how lived experience is included.
- Helping make documents easier to read and more accessible.
- Reviewing research plans and proposals, and giving feedback on how research should be carried out.
- Suggesting ideas for future research.
- Helping researchers share findings more widely.
- Helping shape the development of a research programme.
- Sharing reflections on completed projects.

Partnership

The SPHR PAN includes people who are interested in:

- Public Health challenges.

- Helping SPHR do excellent research.
- Research governance and steering (helping guide and oversee research).
- Developing, putting into practice, and evaluating the involvement strategy.

Meetings

- The PAN meets **quarterly** (4 times a year).
- Meetings are usually online on **Zoom**, unless we agree something different.
- You do not have to attend every meeting.
- You can also arrange to meet online as needed with:
  - **Rachel Proctor** — r.h.proctor@exeter.ac.uk
  - **Michelle Tester-Jones** — M.C.Tester-Jones3@exeter.ac.uk
- You may also do work and communicate by email.
- If you are not sure what an activity involves, **please confirm the scope of work and whether payment can be expected before you start**. We cannot pay for time or contributions that have not been agreed in advance.
- PAN meetings are usually **1 hour**, unless agreed otherwise.
- Meetings will **not** be recorded. Notes will be taken and shared with the group for agreement.
- An agenda and any relevant documents will be sent **one week before** meetings.

What we ask of SPHR PAN partners

We ask partners who attend SPHR meetings to:

- **Prepare** — read documents sent in advance. People process information differently, and you can ask for support if needed.
- **Take part** — you can contribute in different ways, such as:
  - speaking in the meeting
  - using the chat function
  - joining breakout group discussions
  - having 1-to-1 conversations
  - sending your thoughts after the meeting
- Everyone is offered a chance to speak if they want to.
- **Be respectful** — treat others with kindness and respect their feelings, wishes, viewpoints, dignity, and rights.

- **Use inclusive language** — do not use offensive or discriminatory comments or language about gender, race, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, neurodiversity, or any other characteristic (including in emails).
- **Keep information confidential** — unless we explicitly agree it can be shared.
- **Help create a welcoming space** — where different communication styles are valued.

We commit to learning together and supporting each other with kindness.

What you can expect of SPHR

The SPHR will:

- Share updates on involvement activity and what difference it has made.
- Provide points of contact for questions about involvement. This is currently:
  - **Michelle Tester-Jones** — M.C.Tester-Jones3@exeter.ac.uk
  - **Rachel Proctor** — r.h.proctor@exeter.ac.uk
- If Michelle and Rachel are unavailable, you can contact the SPHR Director for Public Involvement:
  - **GJ Melendez Torres** — G.J.Melendez-Torres@exeter.ac.uk
- Agree and provide adjustments or support where needed (for example, sending documents by post or in other formats).
- Provide support between meetings and send useful email updates, including involvement and/or training and development opportunities.
- Take complaints seriously and respond in a timely and proportionate way.
- Take action if inappropriate behaviour happens during a meeting. This may include:
  - a verbal warning first
  - removal from the meeting if behaviour continues or escalates
  - review of membership

Remuneration and payments

We are committed to paying remuneration in a timely way and supporting you to claim payments.

Full details about remuneration can be found here.

We aim to make payments within **6 weeks** of receiving payment details.

Involvement and engagement activities are usually paid in line with NIHR guidance. This guidance can be found here.

You can choose to receive payment by:

- bank transfer
- vouchers

Some opportunities are **unpaid**. These may include events that do not require active involvement, such as:

- meetings that only provide information or updates
- lecture series
- activities to develop a project before a funding application

If an opportunity is unpaid, we will make this clear beforehand.

Important: Please make sure you know how long an activity will take, what you will be asked to do, and what payment (if any) is offered. If you are unsure, check with the named contact organising the activity. We cannot pay for time and contributions that are not agreed in advance.

Review of the document

We will review this Terms of Reference document together **once a year**.

The next review date is **summer 2027**.

Key questions

Do I need any specific experience or knowledge?

Sometimes. Some activities need specific lived experience. Others do not.

I require specific support. Will this be taken into consideration?

Yes. We understand everyone is different. As a PAN member, you are expected to take part in activities that help steer and advise the school. Please talk with us about what support you need. We will do our best to support you.

Will I be paid?

Yes, most involvement and engagement activities are paid in line with NIHR guidance (found here).

You can choose payment by bank transfer or vouchers.

Some opportunities are unpaid, such as meetings that only provide information or updates, lecture series, or activities that develop a project leading up to a funding application. If so, this will be made clear beforehand.

It is important you feel comfortable and informed about how long an activity will last, what will be expected of you, and the details of payment. This helps avoid disappointment. If you are unclear, please check with the named contact organising the activity. We cannot pay for time and contributions that are not agreed in advance.

How soon can I expect payment?

We know prompt payment is important. We are working to improve our processes. Currently, you can expect payment within **6 weeks**.

Please note:

- It helps if you return payment forms and other requested information within **7 days**.
- The facilitator passes your payment form to the University of Exeter finance systems for final processing. The facilitator cannot make the final payment themselves.
- We aim to pay within 6 weeks of receiving the forms. This may vary due to capacity levels, absence, or other circumstances. We will tell you about any known changes to the payment timeline.

Thank you.