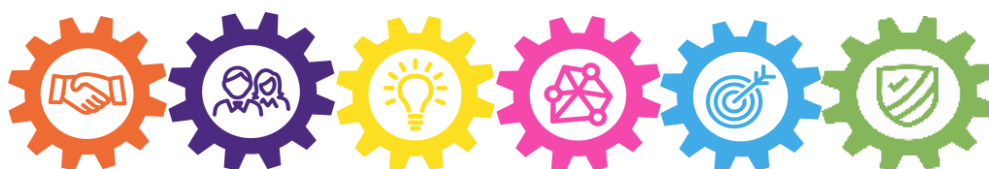


Public Involvement and Community Engagement Strategy – Addendum

Covering May 2024 – March 2026

*Updated March 2025



**Our vision is to
achieve better,
fairer health and
care at all ages
and in all places.**



Introduction

Public involvement and community engagement (PICE) is a core part of the overall ARC NENC vision. PICE activities are embedded at a governance level as well as across all the ARC Research Themes and individual ARC research activities.

PICE is well supported by the ARC Management Team and is well understood by ARC researchers, PhD and Masters' students, practice fellows and public members.

Training, support, and ongoing capacity building activities are delivered across all ARC partners and are inclusive and supportive of public contributors, community groups as well as researchers and practitioners.

There is a strong regional commitment to strengthening the partnerships with public contributors and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to create inclusive and meaningful opportunities to co-produce health and social care research that has a real impact on people and communities.

Purpose of this addendum

The original NIHR ARC NENC PICE Strategy (2021) was amended in the light of the 18-month extension that was provided by NIHR, and that will extend current ARC activities to March 2026.

This addendum covers the extension of PICE activities until March 2026 and was reviewed in March 2025.

Our PICE strategy is built on the UK Standards for Public Involvement in Research – shown below.



Strategy Aims and Objectives (2019 – 2024)

The aims and objectives that were agreed for the initial funded period of the ARC 2019 – 2024 are set out below and were agreed in the original submission (2019).

The PICE Strategy (2021) [Our Public Involvement & Community Engagement Strategy - ARC \(nihr.ac.uk\)](#) was co-produced with public contributors from the outset. It has been reviewed on an annual basis against the UK Standards for Public Involvement (see appendix).

Aims

To embed PICE in the planning, development, and delivery of the ARC strategic aims at every stage, from priority setting and governance, across the work of ARC themes and project design and delivery, maximising knowledge mobilisation and impact, and in dissemination.

Initial PICE objectives

- To co-design, co-develop and co-produce our ARC research and PICE with members of the public to ensure that the activity and content is relevant, informative and accessible.
- To provide opportunities for the public to influence and be actively involved in the governance of the ARC and at all stages of our research and projects.
- To ensure that our research is both informed by, and designed to deliver on, public priorities and needs.
- To meaningfully engage the public in debate and dialogue about our research.
- To illustrate the impact of our research and how it is actually making a difference to people's lives and communities.

Extension period (2024 – 2026) PICE objectives

- To review and update the PICE Strategy.
- Work with public members and community groups to identify research priorities.
- Supporting the development of research proposals from VCSE/Public Contributors.
- Developing an EDI (Equity Diversity and Inclusion) Framework (related to PICE).
- Co-producing Ethical Guidelines for PICE activity in collaboration with our host trust, university partners, public members and regional health and care partners.

Delivering the PICE Strategy

As the PICE Strategy is reviewed on an annual basis and is reported back to NIHR against the UK Standards for Public Involvement, this addendum has been structured around these standards.

If you have any questions about this strategy, please email arcnenc@cntw.nhs.uk



Standard 1: Inclusive Opportunities

What the standard says	Offer public involvement opportunities that are accessible and that reach people and groups according to research needs. Research to be informed by a diversity of public experience and insight, so that it leads to treatments and services which reflect these needs.
How we will achieve this	Ongoing recruitment and capacity building across the Public Advisory Network and Young Public Advisory Network. We will provide continuous opportunities for research priority setting by the public and communities. Creating inclusive opportunities for individual groups/communities: D/deaf Well-Being Network; Developing PPI with care home residents, developing an African Family Research Support Group, a Palliative and End of Life Care research Network PICE Group and Deep End Practice group. The YPAN Group is a regional group of young people aged 12 – 23 which meets to review research and agree future research needs. There have been several regional initiatives supported by the ARC to ensure that public/community voices are being heard and that there are opportunities to highlight future research priorities. These include: • The Multi-Verse Lab - MultiVerse Lab report reveals the most talked-about health issues in our region - ARC (nhr.ac.uk), • Co-funding VONNE Research Engagement Partnership post - North East and North Cumbria VCSE Research Partnerships Programme (vonne.org.uk), • The Dialogue & Change Award The Dialogue and Change Award - ARC (nhr.ac.uk), • The development of a NENC Children & Young People's Research Partnership 2024-26



Standard 2: Working Together

What the standard says	Work together in a way that values all contributions, and that builds and sustains mutually respectful and productive relationships. Public involvement in research is better when people work together towards a common purpose, and different perspectives are respected.
How we will achieve this	Co-production of PICE Strategy Addendum with members of the PAN (Public Advisory Network) who have also reviewed the Strategy in 2025. A small working group of researchers, public contributors, VCSE and ARC partners have co-produced a practice guidance framework for Ethical Practice which was launched in October 2024. It was initiated by PAN members concerns about the welfare of researchers and public contributors working in sensitive and challenging areas of research. A diverse range of opportunities are created that encourage involvement and engagement with individuals and communities from many geographical areas, and with diverse people and places. There is choice and a great deal of flexibility in the way that people choose to engage individually or collectively. The regional PICE Leads network, the Creating Connections Network is well attended and well established and ensures there is good collaboration across different infrastructure organisations which reduces duplication and competition. The PICE Manager chairs this network.



Standard 3: Support and learning

What the standard says	Offer and promote support and learning opportunities that build confidence and skills for public involvement in research. Remove practical and social barriers that stop members of the public and research professionals from making the most of public involvement in research.
How we will achieve this	A PICE Special Interest Group: Monthly online sessions with a different focus/presentation every month and facilitated Q&A. Wider promotion of this Group is required. PICE Introductory Workshops are delivered by the PICE Manager, PICE Research Fellow and public Contributor twice a year. There are online learning modules available, and full use is made of the NIHR Learning for Involvement resources. The ARC Virtual College <u>Virtual College - ARC (nihr.ac.uk)</u> is accessible to all public contributors. Wider promotion of this resource is required. The ARC Director chairs a Regional Remuneration Working Group with representations from the Regional NIHR Infrastructure Management Group and all of the regional universities. A regional document consistent with NIHR Guidance <u>Payment guidance for researchers and professionals NIHR</u> has been approved. Public contributors and VCSE groups are members of the NENC Peer Research Community of Practice which is co-facilitated by ARC and Fuse (Centre for Translational Research) and host quarterly online and in person meetings. There is a regional PICE Training Sub-Group that is part of the wider Creating Connections Network that is looking at developing and securing the funding for a regional PICE training programme to commence in September 2025.



Standard 4: Communications

What the standard says	Use plain language for well-timed and relevant communications, as part of involvement plans and activities. Communicate with a wider audience about public involvement and research, using a broad range of approaches that are accessible and appealing.
How we will achieve this	Regular news items and blogs developed and shared to highlight public involvement and its impact. PAN members regularly contribute to and review Plain English summaries for individual research studies. PAN members support ARC Communications Strategy by reviewing communications activities and website content, via a PAN Communications Group. PAN members helped to review the development of our Evidence Hub – which hosts plain language summaries of research findings Evidence Archive - ARC (nihr.ac.uk). Wider promotion of this resource is required. A weekly newsletter (emailed) shares information about research opportunities, research outputs, webinars, training, tools, and resources, delivered each week by the PICE Manager. Special editions will mark particular events in the calendar. The ARC is part of a regional work programme to create a Code of Practice and a Community Engagement Toolkit for researchers and the VCSE to support partnership working. The resources will be launched in the autumn of 2025. Creating accessible animation/tools to share resources, for example: Animation: Co-production - what is it and why do it? - ARC (nihr.ac.uk)



Standard 5: Impact

What the standard says	Seek improvement by identifying and sharing the difference that public involvement makes to research. Understand the changes, benefits and learning gained from the insights and experiences of patients, carers, and the public.
How we will achieve this	Public contributors' representation on ARC Implementation and Impact Special Interest Group and co-deliver workshops and seminars. Developing further opportunities to co-produce /co-author and co-deliver research findings. A number of co-authored papers and book chapters are available. Ensuring that public contributors and communities have the opportunity to identify research priorities and be co-applicants in funding applications. For example helping to shape the submission for ARC 2 funding. Learning from the pilot to deliver the Dialogue and Change Award will inform future PICE impact/evaluation processes. Publish research findings in an accessible format, including Easy Read versions that are being developed. via our Evidence Hub.



Standard 6: Governance

What the standard says	Involve the public in research management, regulation, leadership, and decision making. Public involvement in research governance can help research be more transparent and gain public trust.
How we will achieve this	There is PAN representation on all ARC Governance arrangements: Executive Board, Stakeholder Board, EDI Group, Communications Group etc. Additional opportunities for involvement are promoted as and when they arise. The ARC is signatory to HRA Shared Commitment to Public Involvement and two members of the PAN represent the ARC at National Steering Group meetings and Public Contributors meetings. There are two key members of staff within the ARC, the PICE Manager and PICE Research Fellow. There is also a PICE operational budget to support remuneration. Resources for training and support are also made available. Resources for several regional developments have also been forthcoming (VONNE post and the Regional PICE Training Programme). Discussions are underway to develop a data collection/monitoring process to record PICE activity and to ensure that there is a way of monitoring inclusivity through an EDI Strategy. This will be consistent with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) rules.

Appendix: UK Standards for Public Involvement

Definitions

We use the INVOLVE definition of involvement (www.invo.org.uk) which defines public involvement in research as research being carried out **with** or **by** members of the public rather than **to**, **about** or **for** them, and uses the following terms to distinguish between the different activities:

- **Involvement** – where members of the public are actively involved in research projects and in research organisations.
- **Participation** – where people take part in a research study.
- **Engagement** – where information and knowledge about research is provided and disseminated.

Public contributors - is the generic term used to describe service users, experts by experience, patient and the public and is consistent with current NIHR terminology.



INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES: We offer public involvement opportunities that are accessible and that reach people and groups according to research needs.



WORKING TOGETHER: We work together in a way that values all contributions, and that builds and sustains mutually respectful and productive relationships.



SUPPORT & LEARNING: We offer and promote support and learning that builds confidence and skills for public involvement in research.



COMMUNICATIONS: We use plain language for timely, two way and targeted communications, as part of involvement plans and activities.



IMPACT: To drive improvement, we capture and share the difference that public involvement makes to research.



GOVERNANCE: We involve the public in our governance and leadership so that our decisions promote and protect the public interest.

Explanation of acronyms

PICE - Public Involvement & Community Engagement

PAN/YPAN - Public Advisory Network/Young Public Advisory Network

VCSE - Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise

EDI - Equity Diversity and Inclusion

GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation

PICE Strategy on a Page 2024 - 2026

Aim

To embed PICE in the planning, development, and delivery of the ARC strategic aims at every stage, from priority setting and governance, through individual theme and project design and delivery, to dissemination, maximising knowledge mobilisation and impact, and in dissemination.

Objectives

To co-design, co-develop and co-produce our ARC research and PICE with members of the public to ensure the activity and content is relevant, informative, and accessible.

To provide opportunities for the public and communities to influence and be actively involved in the governance of the ARC, and at all stages of our research and projects.

To ensure our research is both informed by and designed to deliver on public priorities and needs.

To meaningfully engage the public in debate and dialogue about our research.

To illustrate the impact of our research and how it is actually making a difference to people's lives.

Communication

All PICE activities will be communicated through internal and external communication channels including:

- ARC website www.arc-nenc.nihr.ac.uk
- X @NIHR_ARC_NENC
- [linkedin.com/company/nihr-arc-north-east-north-cumbria](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nihr-arc-north-east-north-cumbria)
- Delivery of a weekly E-Bulletin
- Attendance at research seminars, workshops and training is encouraged.

Training

Ongoing consultation is taking place with members of the PAN to identify their training needs and to deliver inclusive, accessible training and capacity building activities across the ARC.

The PICE Special Interest Group is open to any member of the PAN and ARC partners.

The Virtual College can be accessed by public contributors & will be widely publicised.

A regional VCSE training and support programme is being co-produced and will be widely promoted.



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<https://sites.google.com/nihr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home>

NIHR | INVOLVE

Impact

PICE activities will be monitored in line with all internal and NIHR monitoring and reporting requirements.

PICE activity is reported at all Management Meetings, Stakeholder Board, Executive Board, Communications Group & Impact and Implementation Special Interest Group.

A suite of impact tools is being developed.

The Dialogue and Change Award was created for ARC NENC to demonstrate PICE impact.

Our Evidence Hub provides short easy read summaries of all ARC research.