



NIHR Applied Research Collaboration: Thames Valley

Governance Public Contributors: Recruitment Pack

Thank you for showing an interest in this opportunity to become an ARC Thames Valley Governance Public Contributor. We want to recruit new members for our Lived Experience Panel (LEAP) and three Strategy Board Public Partners. Details for all opportunities are contained in this document.

We are keen to hear from adults of all ages and backgrounds and welcome contact from anyone who might be interested. We strive to be representative of the communities that we aim to work with. All applicants will be given fair consideration and will not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic. We can make reasonable adjustments for disability and for accessibility.

You can contact Una Rennard, Public Involvement Manager (please see contact details at the end of this document), for an informal chat if you would like to talk through how your experience might be relevant to these roles. Please also share this document with anyone you think might be interested in these opportunities.

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Background

The Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) Thames Valley brings together researchers, health and care professionals, patients and communities to find practical solutions to everyday challenges.

We are hosted by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and led from the University of Oxford's Department of Psychiatry.

We focus on research that can be put into practice quickly helping people live healthier lives and supporting services to work better.

Everything we do starts with listening. By working closely with those who use and deliver services, we ensure our research addresses what matters most—particularly for underrepresented groups.

We support a wide range of research projects. These are grouped into themes ([**Themes overview – NIHR Applied Research Collaboration: Thames Valley**](#)) but in general this breaks down into two types of research:

Applied health research – research intended to solve practical problems as opposed to more curiosity driven early research.

Research on implementing new health and care evidence into day-to-day practice in health and social care, and public health.

For both, it is important that we work in partnership with all stakeholders (for example patients, public, carers, clinicians, practitioners, policymakers and commissioners) so we can understand how research findings will work in the real world.

The ARC is currently funded until March 2031. Both opportunities are potentially until 2031 (although people can choose to leave at any time).

Strategy Board Public Partner

Strategy Board Public Partner – What is the role?

Public Partners on the ARC Strategy Board have an equal voice and vote alongside all other members of the Board. We encourage Public Partners to play the role of “critical friend” and actively engage in conversations from a public perspective, for example:

- Do you feel like good stakeholder involvement has taken place in proposals or decisions presented to the Board?
- Do things make sense to you?
- Is this a good way to spend public money?
- Are decisions made in a transparent way?

You will also be supported to engage with communities and/or community research networks and activities to ensure broader community perspectives within the ARC.

Public Partners also become members of the ARC Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP). This group focuses on how Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) can be effective and how it can be strengthened throughout the organisation. The LEAP is made up of public contributors who may have experience of being involved in research and are individually linked to the work within our research themes. The group is involved with activities such as monitoring PPI, reviewing documents, training plans for early career researchers, events, implementation and supporting the delivery of the PPI strategy. The group regularly meets in full either in person, online or hybrid, depending on the group’s preference. There are also additional opportunities to be involved in activities between meetings.

Strategy Board Public Partner – What impact can you make?

The ARC started in April 2026 and is in the early stages of development. As part of the Strategy Board and through your links to communities and the LEAP, you will have opportunities to influence how the ARC is involving people and communities throughout the programme.

Your role will be to highlight areas of concern, give feedback for improvements, and identify what we should be celebrating. Your role will also be to bring a broad range

of experience to the board. This could be a mix of your personal lived experience, awareness of the lived experience of others, and community views.

You will also be able to provide input into the work of the core team to ensure that there is involvement in all the work of the ARC.

If you have ideas on how PPI could be strengthened within the organisation, the ARC has resources available to support you in taking initiatives.

Strategy Board Public Partner – What experience do you need?

You don't necessarily need to meet all the requirements listed below but we would like our Public Partners to have experience of involving communities in decision making and they should enjoy being involved in strategic discussions.

You can contact Una Rennard (please see contact details at the end of this document) for an informal chat if you want to discuss how your personal experience might relate to the following specification.

We are looking for people who can offer the following:

1. Experience of being involved in health and social care research as a public contributor and/or experience of strategic involvement in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (e.g. as a trustee), within health and social care settings (e.g. as a public member of a Clinical Commissioning Group or Integrated Care Board) or in similar or related settings.
2. Lived experience of a health condition and accessing health/social care (this could be as a carer) and/or have an understanding of a wide range of other peoples lived experience.
3. Experience of presenting a broad community perspective and have a good understanding of what meaningful community involvement in decision making and/or PPI looks like and what is required for it to happen.
4. Feel comfortable reading and commenting on complex documents, asking questions, and sharing opinions within a group setting.
5. You do not need to have experience of being part of a strategy board. However, it would be helpful if you are familiar with taking part in (formal) meetings either through voluntary or professional experience.
6. We are particularly looking for people living within the Thames Valley area.

7. Be comfortable using email and video conferencing software like MS Teams and Zoom. Ability to access documents online using tools such as google docs.
 8. Be able to prepare for and join quarterly Strategy Board meetings and other meetings as required (please note that these take place Monday-Friday during working hours, meetings are in person and are usually 2-3 hours per meeting plus pre and post meetings).
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LEAP Member

LEAP Member – What is the role?

The ARC's Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) focuses on how PPI can be effective and how it can be strengthened throughout the organisation.

If successful, you will join the LEAP. It is made up of public contributors who may have experience of being involved in research and have lived experience of accessing health/social care or care for someone who does. LEAP members can also be linked to our research projects or the work within our research themes.

The group is involved with activities such as monitoring PPI, reviewing documents, training plans for early career researchers, events, implementation and supporting the delivery of the PPI strategy. The group meets regularly. Meetings can be in person or online and where needed can be both, depending on the group's preference. There are also additional opportunities to be involved in activities between meetings.

You will also have the opportunity to become a Theme PPI co-lead within one of our themes which cover a wide variety of research. The themes are:

- The life course themes:
 - Start Well
 - Live Well
 - Age Well
- The cross-cutting themes:
 - Research Inclusion and Health Inequalities
 - Digital, HealthTech and Data
 - Community, Home and Social Care
 - Planning and Delivering Social Care
 - Knowledge Mobilisation, Implementation and Partnerships

In this role you will work more closely with your allocated theme.

We work flexibly with our LEAP members and work hard to make it possible for individuals to contribute in a way that suits them best.

LEAP Member – What impact can you have?

As part of the LEAP group, you will:

- influence how the ARC is involving people in the research it does.
- be able to flag areas of concern, give feedback for improvements and identify where we do good stuff.
- be able to provide input into the work of the core team to ensure that there is involvement in all the work of the ARC.

If you are linked to a theme, you will be able to support them in developing their PPI and helping them to make sure that community voices are involved in the decisions they make about their work and research.

If you have ideas on how PPI could be strengthened within the organisation, the ARC has resources available to support you in taking initiatives. You will need to seek agreement from the core PPI Team to progress these ideas.

LEAP Member – What experience do you need?

You don't necessarily need to meet all the requirements listed below. In principle what we are looking for are LEAP Members who will bring their lived experience and have an interest in how research can make things better.

You can contact Una Rennard (please see contact details at the end of this document) for an informal chat if you want to discuss how your personal experience might relate to the following specification.

We are looking for people who can offer the following:

1. Able to consider the experience and views of others.
2. Experience of being involved in health and social care research as a public contributor and/or lived experience of a health condition, accessing social care and/or as a carer.
3. Feel comfortable reading and commenting on documents, asking questions, and sharing opinions within a group setting.
4. We are particularly looking for people living within the Thames Valley area.

5. Be able to prepare for and join regular meetings.
6. Be comfortable using (or learning to use – we can offer support and training) email and video conferencing software like Microsoft Teams and Zoom and the ability to access documents online using tools such as google docs (we can also make documents available as paper copies).

What support is available?

The ARC PPI staff team are available to support you through individual conversations and group learning opportunities. We can also consider supporting access to technology if applicants do not have personal devices etc that can be used. The ARC PPI team will provide opportunities for you to discuss any specific needs you might have to undertake the role.

You will be offered payment for your time and contributions, and expenses:

- You will receive £27.50 per hour for attending and contributing to meetings and for other activities related to this role.
- The time required is approximately ½ day every other month.
- When meetings are in person, travel expenses, in line with the policy of the University of Oxford, will be reimbursed and for virtual meetings a £5 allowance will be provided to contribute to the costs of your device, internet usage etc.
- Additional costs can be covered such as:
 - taxi transfers
 - covering (child)care costs
 - a personal assistant
 - specialised transport

but need to be discussed in advance with the PPI team.

- When you are offered a learning opportunity necessary for your role, you will be reimbursed for your time to attend the training in line with NIHR (National Institute for Health Research) payment guidance.

If any additional opportunities to be involved arise through this role, we will be clear about whether or not payment for your time and expenses will be available.

How to apply

To apply for this role, you must do so by 9 November 2026 at midday

If you would like to have a chat with someone before applying for this role, please contact Una Rennard (Public Involvement Manager for NIHR ARC: Thames Valley) before 2 November. You can contact her:

- by email at arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk if you provide a phone number, she will call you back.
- Alternatively, you can call her on 01865 289672.

You can apply by doing one of the following:

- Complete a form by clicking this link [**Applied Research Collaboration: Thames Valley Public Contributor Recruitment Autumn 2026 – Fill out form**](#)
- Send an email providing the information requested below to [**arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk**](mailto:arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk).
- Submit a document providing the information requested below attached to an email sent to [**arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk**](mailto:arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk).
- Submit a short video or audio recording providing the information requested below attached to an email sent to [**arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk**](mailto:arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk).

Important things to remember:

- Please note the word limit for each question and stick to this limit.
 - Whichever method you use to apply you must do so by 9 November at midday
 - We are aiming to hold informal chats during the week of 30 November 2026.
 - Roles will begin in January 2027.
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Information required for applying by email, in a document or short video/audio recording

Make it clear you are applying for an ARC Thames Valley Governance Public Contributor role either LEAP Member or Strategy Board Public Partner (you can apply for both roles).

Please clearly provide your:

- Name
- Contact Email
- Contact Telephone Number

Please answer the following questions (please stick to the word limits):

1. Please briefly tell us about your lived experience of health and social care, your experience of research and/or your experience of strategic roles. Up to 250 words.
2. Why is this role important to you? What do you hope to gain? What will you bring to the role? Up to 250 words.
3. Please explain how you consider the experiences and views of others. Please give an example. Up to 250 words.
4. Please tell us what experience you have of reading and commenting on (complex) documents, asking questions and contributing opinions in a group setting. Up to 250 words.
5. What is your experience of online tools (e.g. Zoom, Teams, Google Meet etc) and preparing for and attending meetings? Up to 100 words.
6. Please tell us where you live (to do this please provide the first part of your postcode)

Please note: if you want to send us an application by video/audio 250 words is between 1 minute 30 seconds to 2 minutes of speaking at a conversational rate. This means that your audio or video is likely to be somewhere between 5 and 10 minutes long but will depend on the speed at which you speak

Simplified language version

Who Are We?

We are the Applied Research Collaboration (ARC). We are a group that brings together many organisations, like hospitals, universities, local councils, and charities. We work on health and care projects in the Thames Valley area. Our main aim? To make health and care better for everyone.

What's the role?

We are looking for people to join us as “LEAP” members and as a “Strategy Board Public Partners” These people will help make sure that patients and the public have a say in our projects. Here's what you will do:

- Join meetings with other people every two or three months. These can be in person or online.
- Share your thoughts on different ARC activities.
- Help us understand what people need and want from health and care.
- You can also work closely with one of our research areas if you'd like!

How Can You Make a Difference?

By joining us, you can:

- Help shape how we include people in our projects.
- Share ideas to make things better.
- Support different research areas in hearing from the public.

What Experience Should You Have?

It's okay if you don't tick all the boxes below. What's most important is your personal experience and a passion for making things better. Here's what we're looking for:

- Understanding and valuing others' views.
- Knowing about health or care from personal experience.
- Being comfortable sharing your thoughts in a group.
- Living in Thames Valley area.
- Being able to join regular meetings.
- Using email and online meeting tools (like Zoom or Teams).

What Help Will You Get?

We want to support you! Here's how:

- Our team is here for chats and training.
- We will pay you for your time and contribution: £27.50 per hour.
- We cover travel costs and give an extra £5 if the meeting is online.
- If you need any special help or equipment, just let us know!

How to Join Us

Want to get involved? Apply by **9 November at midday**. You can:

- Fill out a form [**NIHR Applied Research Collaboration: Thames Valley Public Contributor Recruitment Autumn 2026 – Fill out form**](#)
- Email or send us a video or audio message.

Got questions? Email ([**arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk**](mailto:arc-tv-ppi@psych.ox.ac.uk)) or call (01865 289672) Una Rennard (Public Involvement Manager for NIHR ARC: Thames Valley) before 2 November. She's happy to help!