Involvement, Engagement & Dissemination Enablement Fund

Guidance notes for applicants

1. Background

The School for Primary Care Research (SPCR) aims to contribute to the NIHR's vision to increase the number and diversity of people involved, engaged and informed about health research.

To support this vision, we are launching an enablement fund for public and community involvement, engagement, and dissemination for our nine member departments[1].

We know that involvement and engagement activities that support the inclusion of diverse voices can make research more relevant and impactful and can also build trust and strengthen relationships between researchers and communities.

Equally, when research findings are disseminated in ways that are accessible, understandable and useful to the public and communities, we can ensure that knowledge generated through research reaches and can be used by those who may benefit from it most.

The purpose of this fund is to support SPCR researchers and member departments in expanding their involvement, engagement, and dissemination activities, with the goal of fostering further opportunity for co-production and collaboration and enhancing inclusion and diversity of the public and communities in research.

To further increase opportunities to access this fund, the fund will operate with a rolling deadline with opportunities for applications across three time points in 2025-26.

2. Scope of the funding call

The enablement fund aims to support activities that enhance public involvement, engagement, and/or dissemination in primary care research.

Overall the scope of the fund is wide and can include activities which would enable:

---

[1] *Centre for Academic Primary Care (University of Bristol); Exeter Collaboration for Academic Primary Care (University of Exeter); School of Medicine (Keele University); Centre for Primary Care (University of Manchester)); Division of Primary Care (University of Nottingham); Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences (University of Oxford); Centre for Primary Care (Queen Mary University of London); School of Primary Care, Population Sciences and Medical Education (University of Southampton); Research Department of Primary Care and Population Health (University College London)*

- the delivery of new and creative approaches to involving, engaging and/or disseminating research findings to relevant public and/or community audiences

- the expansion of current involvement, engagement and/or dissemination plans to a greater diversity of public and/or community audiences

Proposals for funding can be to enhance public involvement, engagement and/or dissemination within a specific primary care research project, or across the SPCR member department.

All activities should promote meaningful collaboration and genuine partnerships with the public and communities, demonstrate a commitment to increasing the diversity of those involved in research, and foster inclusivity.

What this call does not support:

Importantly, this call is not intended to compensate for insufficient budgeting for public involvement, engagement, or dissemination in original research grant application, but aims to support activities for researchers to expand and diversify the groups they are involving and engaging in their research and disseminating their findings to. *This does not apply to capacity award holders, such as PhD students and Fellows, who have limited budget for public involvement in their awards.*

Applications submitted in Rounds 1 and 2 of this fund must not include public involvement or engagement activities which could in any way be used to inform a potential re-application to the SPCR. This includes activities focused on shaping future priorities or directions for primary care research specific to your department. We anticipate that priority setting exercises will be eligible for round 3 of the fund, however will update the guidance if and when any re-application timelines are confirmed.

3. Funding available

For this fund we have two streams of funding available to reflect the different type of activities which this fund can support:

- **Project-specific activities:** Funding is available **up to £2,000** for activities seeking to enhance public and community involvement, engagement and/or dissemination activities within a specific project.

- **Department-wide activities:** Funding is available **up to £5,000** for activities seeking to enhance public and community involvement, engagement and/or dissemination activities

across a SPCR Member Department (this includes activities which span multiple department projects and/or multiple SPCR member departments).

We aim to fund a combination of smaller and larger projects each round.

The grant can cover direct costs to develop, deliver and evaluate the project, staff costs, and 30% overheads.

4. What we are looking to fund:

We want to fund activities which enable a greater diversity of people to be involved, engaged and informed about primary care research.

This could include both activities which support specific projects or support department-wide activity.

Example project-specific ideas:

- Activities that enable you to increase the diversity of voices involved in your research (e.g. running a workshop or creative activity with a greater diversity of public/community members to inform your project)

- Activities that enable engagement with wider communities through events such as pop-ups, community cafés, or social media campaigns.

- Co-designing dissemination materials with the public and/or communities to share research findings in a way that are accessible and understandable (videos, podcasts, animations, comic books, infographics etc).

- Further development of existing project materials to be shared more widely with new and diverse audiences (e.g. through translation or by creating more accessible versions)

Example department-wide ideas:

- Engaging with communities to understand views about research, including possible barriers to their involvement

- To have initial 'relationship-building' conversations with communities to explore ways of working in partnership going forward

- Widening department public and community networks to reflect the local population the department serves

- Developing and delivering community engagement activities around primary care research

- Facilitating involvement activities to understand community priorities and unmet need related to primary care *(currently for Round 3 only)*

Please note this is not an exhaustive list, and activities the fund would support are not limited to these examples, rather they are intended for illustrative purposes.

If you have any queries about the scope of the fund and eligibility of an idea, please feel free to get in touch with the SPCR PPIE Manager, Halle Johnson, via spcr@keele.ac.uk

5. Eligibility

The call is open for researchers and staff affiliated with an SPCR member department[1].

We invite those across all career stages to apply, and particularly encourage applications from PhD students and Early Career Researchers whose funding for public and community involvement, engagement and dissemination may be limited. Please note that PhD Students should obtain approval to apply from their supervisor.

Please note we will only accept one application in the 'department-wide' stream from each department each round. We require any department-wide applications to be discussed with your Head of Department and/or SPCR Senior Leadership Team within the Department. If there are likely to be multiple department-wide applications from a Department these will need to be prioritised internally to decide which application will be submitted each round.

For the project-specific stream, applicants are only able to apply once each round, but please note if funding has already been awarded to a project through this fund any additional applications will need to clearly demonstrate additional added value.

If unsuccessful in one round, you may also be invited to re-apply in the next round, taking on feedback provided on your application by reviewers.

6. Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to submit a short final report (template provided), within three months of the project end date. This will be to report on learnings, outcomes and experiences and provide an overall evaluation of how the activities went.

You will also be invited to write a blog on the project for the SPCR website and/or present at a relevant SPCR showcase to share learnings with a wider audience. Further reporting might be set as a funding condition by the review panel.

7. Deadline and timelines

This will be a rolling fund across three rounds, with deadlines to apply across 2025-26, listed in the table below.

	Applications must be submitted by:	Review Panel Date	Outcome notification	Projects can start from:	Projects must be completed by:
Round 1	Thursday 24th July 2025 by 5pm	August 2025	September 2025	01 October 2025	31 December 2026
Round 2	Thursday 23rd October 2025 by 5pm	November 2025	December 2025	01 January 2026	31 December 2026
Round 3	Thursday 29th January 2026 by 5pm	February 2026	March 2026	01 April 2026	31 December 2026

If applications are received after the submission deadline for the round, they will be reviewed as part of the next round.

8. How to apply

To apply, please submit your application via our online grant portal: https://nihr-school-for-primary-care-research.grantplatform.com/

Lead applicants responsible for completing and submitting the application will need to register on the online grant portal to apply.

9. Assessment process/criteria

A review panel including the SPCR Assistant Director, Senior Programme Manager, public partners, and involvement and engagement professionals will review applications.

The panel will review and discuss each application in line with the following criteria:

- Is the application written in Plain English?
- Does the proposal meet the aims of the fund?
- Is the reasoning for the proposed activities clear?
- Is the audience clearly defined?
- Are the proposed activities outlined appropriate for this audience?
- Are the activities achievable and feasible within the funding timescale?
- Are there clear plans for evaluation?
- Are there clear plans for sharing learning from the activities?
- Are the activities likely to benefit primary care research, researchers and public and/or communities involved?
- Are the proposed activities inclusive?

10. Contact details

If you require further information or have any questions; please contact the SPCR Public Involvement & Engagement Manager, Halle Johnson: halle.johnson@bristol.ac.uk or spcr@keele.ac.uk

In addition, your local SPCR PPI lead is available to provide support in the development of your application. It is recommended to ask for their support at least 3 weeks before the call's deadline.

Appendix A - Guidance on completing the Application Form

Please ensure that all parts of the application are written in Plain English.

Starting details

Season: Pre-filled

Applicant: pre-filled

Category: Please detail the funding stream you are applying for, if your activity relates to a specific project you should check the box for 'project-specific activity'. Alternatively, if your activity goes across multiple projects across your SPCR Member Department, or reflects an activity that could benefit the whole Department (or multiple SPCR Member Departments) please check the box for 'Department-wide activity'.

Note, you can only choose one stream of funding, not both.

Short project title: The project title should relate to the involvement/ engagement activity/project you are proposing and if part of an existing research project the title should be different.

Section A: Project details

Proposed start date: Project start dates will be dependent on the round you apply for, please see table below:

	Applications must be submitted by:	Projects can start from:	Projects must be completed by:
Round 1	Thursday 24th July 2025 by 5pm	01 October 2025	31 December 2026
Round 2	Thursday 23rd October 2025 by 5pm	01 January 2026	31 December 2026
Round 3	Thursday 29th January 2026 by 5pm	01 April 2026	31 December 2026

Proposed end date: Regardless of what round you apply for, all activities must be complete by 31st December 2026. A final report will need to be submitted within 3 months of the project's end date.

Type of activity: You will be also asked to detail whether your activity is an involvement, engagement and/or dissemination activity. We understand that some activities will span multiple categories, so please ensure you tick all that apply. You may wish to consult Appendix B of this document which has a glossary of terms if you are unsure where your activity fits.

Section B: Lead Applicant/s

Lead details: Please provide the name, email and current role of the lead applicant and the SPCR Member Department they are affiliated with. Please note that the lead applicant needs to be affiliated to one of the SPCR member departments.

Co-Lead Details:. There is the option for co-lead for this funding round. If you have a co-lead please provide their details.

Section C: Project Team

Details of co-applicants: Please add details of any co-applicants, including public and/or community co-applicants. Please provide name, organisation (where applicable) and proposed role/responsibility in the project on a new line for each co-applicant.

Please note that co-applicants are individuals with responsibility for the day-to-day management and delivery of the project.

Details of collaborators: Please provide details of any collaborators, this can include community organisations and/or other individuals and organisations who will be supporting and collaborating on the project.

Summary of team expertise: Please briefly outline how the team's expertise will complement each other and support the delivery of the activity/ies proposed.

Section D: Project outline

Please use this section to provide information on your proposed activities. Questions regarding your proposed activity will differ depending on the funding stream you have chosen. Please see further guidance for each stream below.

(a) Project-specific funding stream

Q1 Plain English Summary: This should be a summary of your proposed activities, including what you hope to achieve (aims/objectives), how you will do this (your approach) and the proposed timelines for these activities. Note that if your application is successful, the information provided in this question will be published on the SPCR website.

Q2 Audience: Please be as specific as possible about the people, groups and/or communities who your activities will involve and engage and/or who you will be disseminating findings to. Detailed descriptions are encouraged rather than broad terms such as 'the general public'. When thinking about 'who' you may wish to refer to the NIHR INCLUDE study guidance which identified some examples of under-served groups in research. We also ask you to provide a rationale for why you aim to target these group/s with your activity, including how this will help you to increase diversity of those involved and/or engaged in your project.

Q3. Link to ongoing research: Please outline if this activity relates to an existing funded research project. If SPCR-funded, we ask applicants to include the SPCR reference. Where this activity is not linked to ongoing research project, please just put N/A.

Q4. Added value: This funding call aims to support activities which build on involvement, engagement and dissemination activities to increase inclusivity and diversity. In this section we therefore ask applicants to detail how this activity extends on any current involvement, engagement and/or dissemination activities related to your project.

In your response, please summarise the potential added value and benefit that your proposed activity may have on:

- your own research
- primary care research more generally
- future involvement and engagement practice

If this a new piece of work not linked to any existing research please just focus on the potential added value and benefit of the proposed activity in your response.

Q5. Collaboration: A key aim of this fund is to foster opportunities for meaningful collaboration and genuine partnerships with the public and/or communities. We would like to know how your proposal will work towards this aim. You might want to consider how you will:

- value the input of those involved/engaged
- build trust
- make the experience rewarding for all involved (reciprocity)

You should also consider how the activity could help develop longer-term relationships and how involvement may benefit public partners and communities involved.

Q6. Inclusion: In this question please outline the steps you will take to ensure your activity is inclusive. This includes how your planned approach will foster inclusion. You may wish to reflect on additional budget/support to enable involvement and/or engagement of certain groups – for example, this could include carer or childcare support, meetings outside working hours, translation costs, training opportunities). You may wish to refer to the NIHR Research Support Service EDI toolkit when completing this question:

- https://www.rssleicesterresources.org.uk/public-involvement

Q7: Challenges/Barriers: We know working with the public and communities isn't always easy and there are likely to be barriers and challenges you face along the way when delivering your activity(e.g. time constraints, reaching specific communities, resource limitations). In this section we would like applicants to demonstrate that they have thought through the potential challenges to involvement, engagement and/or dissemination they might face during this activity/project and considered ways to overcome these.

Q8. Evaluation: When answering this question, please explain how you will assess whether your proposed activity has achieved its intended aims and objectives. Consider including:

- **What success will look like** for your activity

- **What feedback you will collect**

- **How you will collect this information**

- **Who will be involved in the evaluation process**

Evaluation doesn't need to be complex— we're looking for considered, proportionate approaches that help you learn from the activity and support reflection on any impacts of the activity (both positive and negative).

(b) Department-wide funding stream

Q1 Plain English Summary: This should be a summary of your proposed activities, including what you hope to achieve (aims/objectives), how you will do this (your approach)

and the proposed timelines for these activities. Note that if your application is successful, the information provided in this question will be published on the SPCR website.

Q2 Audience: Please be as specific as possible about the people, groups and/or communities who your activities will involve and engage and/or who you will be disseminating findings to. Detailed descriptions are encouraged rather than broad terms such as 'the general public'. When thinking about 'who' you may wish to refer to the NIHR INCLUDE study guidance which identified some examples of under-served groups in research. We also ask you to provide a rationale for why you aim to target these group/s with your activity, including how this will help you to increase diversity of those involved and/or engaged in your project.

Q3. Added value: This funding call aims to support activities which build on involvement, engagement and dissemination activities to increase inclusivity and diversity.

In this section we therefore ask applicants to detail how this activity extends on and adds value on any current involvement, engagement and/or dissemination activities within your own SPCR Member Department, and/or across SPCR Member Departments.

In your response please summarise the potential added value and benefit that your proposed activity may have on:

- Public partners and/or communities
- your own Department and researchers/staff within it
- the wider SPCR Community
- future involvement and engagement practice
- primary care research more generally

Q4. Collaboration: A key aim of this fund is to foster opportunities for meaningful collaboration and genuine partnerships with the public and/or communities. We would like to know how your proposal will work towards this aim. You might want to consider how you will:

- value the input of those involved/engaged
- build trust
- make the experience rewarding for all involved (reciprocity)

You should also consider how the activity could help develop longer-term relationships and how involvement may benefit public partners and communities involved.

Q5. Inclusion: In this question please outline the steps you will take to ensure your activity is inclusive. This includes how your planned approach will foster inclusion. You may wish to reflect on additional budget/support to enable involvement and/or engagement of certain groups – for example, this could include carer or childcare support, meetings outside working hours, translation costs, training opportunities). You may wish to refer to the NIHR Research Support Service EDI toolkit when completing this question:

- https://www.rssleicesterresources.org.uk/public-involvement

Q6. Challenges/Barriers: We know working with the public and communities isn't always easy and there are likely to be barriers and challenges you face along the way when delivering your activity(e.g. time constraints, reaching specific communities, resource limitations). In this section we would like applicants to demonstrate that they have thought through the potential challenges to involvement, engagement and/or dissemination they might face during this activity/project and considered ways to overcome these.

Q7. Evaluation: When answering this question, please explain how you will assess whether your proposed activity has achieved its intended aims and objectives. Consider including:

- **What success will look like** for your activity

- **What feedback you will collect**

- **How you will collect this information**

- **Who will be involved in the evaluation process**

Evaluation doesn't need to be complex— we're looking for considered, proportionate approaches that help you learn from the activity and support reflection on any impacts of the activity (both positive and negative).

Q8. Implementation & Sharing Learning: Please detail how you will share learning and reflections, and implement these across your department (e.g. seminars, newsletters, team meetings etc) and the wider SPCR Community (e.g. blogs posts, presentations at SPCR events, contribution to newsletters etc).

In this section please reflect on how you envisage learnings to be taken forward and sustained by the project team, others in your department or across the SPCR.

Section E: Budget and costings

Please provide a breakdown of your budget for this project and provide a justification for these. Please be as specific as possible.

Relevant costs could include costs for public partner time, contributions to community groups, costs to facilitate inclusion (i.e. travel, refreshments, childcare or carer costs, translation), consumables, training costs for researcher/ public partners, staff costs, and overheads (please note this is not an exclusive list and additional elements can be added as relevant to your project).

Note that applicants do not have to apply for the full amount that is available per project and that smaller funding requests are welcomed as well.

Lastly, in this section, please state where you expect to receive any further funding to support these activities.

SECTION F: Submission

Please confirm the requirements for submission.

For project-specific activities this includes:

- Completion of a final report within 3-months of the project end date (template provided)
- Understanding that all activities must end by 31st December 2026

For department-wide activities

- Completion of a final report within 3-months of the project end date (template provided)
- Understanding that all activities must end by 31st December 2026
- Confirmation that the Head of Department / SPCR Leadership Team are aware of the submission

Appendix B - Glossary of terms

- **Public -** we use the [NIHR definition](#) which includes patients, potential patients, carers and people who use health and social care services as well as people from specific communities and from organisations that represent people who use services. Also included are people with lived experience of one or more health conditions, whether they're current patients or not.

- **Community -** a group of people who share common characteristics, interests, experiences, or geographical locations and who may be affected by or have a stake in a particular area of research. Communities can be defined by factors such as culture, ethnicity, profession, health conditions, lived experiences, or social connections.

- **Public and Community Involvement in Research**: the active involvement of individuals, groups, and communities in shaping, conducting, and influencing research.

- **Public and Community Engagement in Research:** A way in which research can be shared with the public and communities. It is a two-way process to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and foster mutual learning.

- **Public and Community Dissemination of Research:** The process of sharing research findings in accessible, engaging, and relevant ways to ensure they reach and benefit the public and communities who can use them.

- **Co-production:** An approach in which researchers, practitioners and the public work together, sharing power and responsibility from the start to the end of the project, including the generation of knowledge. The assumption is that those affected by research are best placed to design and deliver it and have skills and knowledge of equal importance.

Appendix C - Useful external guidance

Various guidance and resources have been developed to guide and support research teams in working with, and engaging and disseminating findings to public and communities, including:

- Reaching Out: A Practical Guide to Being Inclusive in Health Research

- Research Design Service - Community Engagement Toolkit

- Being Inclusive in Public Involvement in Health and Care Research

- Inclusive approaches to involvement of community groups in health research: the co-produced CHICO guidance

- Payment guidance for researchers and professionals involving people in research

- Capturing impact and evaluating public involvement

Further resource hubs:

- National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement – Resources

- NIHR – Learning for Involvement