

## **Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Strategy**

*September 2024 - March 2027*

### **1. Introduction and vision**

This Public Involvement and Engagement (PIE) strategy reflects Fuse's commitment and approach to embedding public involvement and engagement activities within Fuse public health research. PIE ensures Fuse research is relevant, respectful and responsive to the needs of the communities it serves. This strategy outlines how Fuse will foster meaningful and sustainable collaborations between researchers, communities and wider networks. This strategy draws on principles from [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#).

Authentic public involvement helps Fuse to co-produce impactful world-class public health research. PIE needs to be rooted as a core component in what we do. It ensures diverse community voices are heard, and enhances the transparency, accountability and impact of Fuse research.

#### **1.1 Plain English summary**

This is Fuse's plan for involving members of the public in research from September 2024 to March 2027. Working with the public makes research more relevant and useful to communities. It ensures people's voices are heard and helps produce better health research.

The main goals are to: build a culture where public involvement is valued and embedded in all work; include diverse voices; and support both researchers and public partners to build skills.

### **2. PIE Strategic objectives**

The objectives of this PIE strategy are to:

- 2.1 Build a culture that values public involvement.
- 2.2 Involve diverse communities in meaningful ways.
- 2.3 Develop skills and capacity, and learning what works.

### **3. PIE Strategic implementation – What are we aiming to do?**

The objectives below reflect the overall Fuse Strategy 2024-2027, as well as the PIE strategic plan. This is aligned with the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#). These objectives will be reviewed annually.

#### **3.1 Build a culture that values public involvement**

- 3.1.1 Maintain and strengthen structures that prioritise and embed PIE in Fuse's work.
- 3.1.2 Make sure researchers and senior colleagues have - or are supported to have - the opportunity to develop and be recognised for having an active role in supporting PIE in research projects and activities.
- 3.1.3 Embed PIE across all of Fuse's research clusters and workstreams, including AskFuse.
- 3.1.4 Strengthen processes and clarify expectations for communication between Fuse, researchers, network partners and public partners involved in activities across Fuse.

### **3.2 Involve diverse communities in meaningful ways**

3.2.1 Increase involvement and engagement relationships with under-served individuals and groups, with reference to [NIHR-INCLUDE](#).

3.2.2 Support development of diverse recruitment resources and support systems for new and established public partners.

3.2.3 Collaborate with the Fuse communications team to develop different ways of communicating and make sure plain language is used across Fuse communications.

### **3.3 Develop skills and capacity and learning what works**

3.3.1 Signpost and contribute to accessible training, development, resources and support opportunities for public partners and Fuse researchers.

3.3.2 Support public partners to produce research alongside Fuse colleagues, and facilitate opportunities for sharing good practice.

3.3.3 Develop a system to routinely collect information on impact of Fuse activities for people involved, on research quality, and for wider communities.

3.3.4 Celebrate and recognise success and impact in PIE activities through established recognition mechanisms.

## **4. Implementation plan - How will we do this?**

We will aim to meet these objectives by collaborating with Fuse research clusters, public partners, AskFuse, Communications, and partner organisations, while maintaining active partnerships with the NIHR School for Public Health Research and other regional, national and international networks.

### **4.1 Developing organisational culture**

- Embed public partner involvement in [AskFuse](#) activities, including communications and enquiries.
- Encourage researchers and senior staff to have active roles in supporting PIE across research projects.
- Regularly review and develop where necessary Fuse's approach to public involvement reward and recognition.
- Showcase and promote Fuse's PIE activities regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Fuse to continue as an active partner of the [Shared Commitment to Public Involvement in Health and Social Care Research](#).
- Establish regular two-way communications with members of the public, researchers and partners across Fuse and wider networks.
- Collaborate with Fuse Communications to develop and embed innovative communications approaches that respect varying health literacy levels and ways of accessing information. Promote the accessibility of Fuse documents and content.
- Develop and establish expectations and processes for 'closing the loop' communications that are accessible, timely and appropriate.

### **4.2 Facilitating meaningful involvement**

- Develop relationships with under-served community connectors, building on experience within the Fuse Public Partner Network and [Creating Connections](#).
- Support NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) Young Person's Advisory Network development.

- Using [NIHR Community Engagement Toolkit](#) principles, promote and encourage sustainable community relationships across Fuse.
- Make use of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) expertise within and beyond Fuse to develop inclusive approaches for Fuse and partner organisations.
- Monitor involvement and engagement relationships and maintain a log.

#### **4.3 Building capacity and demonstrating impact**

- Develop practical templates for consistent description of PIE roles and opportunities.
- Monitor public partner and community-identified learning interests.
- Support use of robust impact assessment tools and evaluation frameworks.
- Collect and monitor information from Fuse activities of the impact of involving Fuse public partners in health research.
- Collaborate with partners including the NIHR School for Public Health Research, Creating Connections, and NIHR Applied Research Collaborations to develop and deliver training and monitor impact.

#### **5. Key partnerships – Who are we working with?**

**Internal audiences:** Fuse universities, members, research clusters, public partners, AskFuse.

**External audiences:** Key partners (below) and community organisations, under-served groups, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, regional and national PIE networks, universities, local authorities/councils, funders, private sector, policy and practice colleagues, international partners, regulatory bodies.

##### **Key partnerships:**

- Fuse research clusters, Communications, and AskFuse
- NIHR School for Public Health Research
- Shared Commitment partners
- NIHR-INCLUDE networks
- Community connectors
- Universities
- EDIS (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health)
- Creating Connections
- NIHR Applied Research Collaborations
- VONNE
- Regional research organisations

#### **6. Evaluation and success metrics - How will we know we are doing a good job?**

##### **Monitoring and review:**

- Strategic objectives reviewed annually by Fuse Centre Strategy Board.
- Encourage regular feedback collection from public partners and researchers.
- Sharing tools with researchers to help assess impact across three levels: people involved, research quality, and community benefit.

##### **Success indicators:**

- Increased diversity in public partner involvement.
- Enhanced researcher confidence and skills in PIE.
- Demonstrated research impact through public involvement.
- Recognition and celebration of PIE achievements through Fuse Awards.

## 7. Contact

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### Guiding principles

The Fuse PIE strategy is guided by the following principles:

- **Inclusivity:** We will actively seek to involve people from a wide range of backgrounds, particularly people from under-served or marginalised communities. We recognise that diversity in perspectives leads to richer and more impactful research.
- **Transparency:** We will be open about our research processes, goals, and findings. Clear communication with the public is key to building trust and ensuring that our work is accessible and understandable.
- **Mutual Respect:** We will value the knowledge, experience, and contributions of all participants, ensuring that public voices are genuinely heard and respected in decision-making processes.
- **Empowerment:** We aim to empower communities by providing people with the information, resources, and opportunities they need to actively engage in public health research.
- **Sustainability:** We are committed to developing long-term relationships with communities, fostering continuous dialogue and involvement beyond individual projects.