

Terms of Reference

Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement Group

1. Purpose

- The [Public Involvement and Engagement Group \(PIEG\)](#) provides strategic oversight, guidance, and support for activities related to public involvement and engagement (PIE) within [Fuse](#), the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health;
- Ensure the voices of the public, service users, carers, patients, families and local communities are integral in shaping policies, practices, and decisions in public health research.

2. Objectives

- To oversee and develop a clear strategy for public involvement and engagement;
- Presentation of projects, methodologies and ideas. This is a forum for sharing learning and providing advice on best practices and innovation in public involvement;
- Develop collaborations, including to wider networks of public involvement groups, such as Creating Connections, and liaising with other research organisations such as the [NIHR School for Public Health Research \(SPHR\)](#) and the [NIHR Applied Research Collaboration \(ARC\) North East and North Cumbria \(NENC\)](#);
- Promote inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness in engagement activities.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Co-chairs:** Provide leadership, ensure meetings are productive, and guide discussions. The co-chair position is held by the Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement Lead and a Fuse Public Partner.
- **Group Members:** Participate in discussions, provide expertise, and represent public interests. Members include:
 - Organisational representatives (e.g. Fuse core staff members, researchers)
 - Public representatives
 - Experts in public engagement, communication, and policy
 - External stakeholders and experts (e.g. members from health research organisations, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), local community groups)
- **Administration:** Manage logistics, schedule meetings, take minutes, and distribute materials. The Fuse Research Administrator and the Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement Manager do this.

Key responsibilities include:

- Reviewing relevant public involvement and engagement documents, policies, and practices;
- Setting performance benchmarks for public involvement and engagement;
- Ensuring feedback from public involvement is acted upon;
- Identifying areas for improvement public involvement and engagement and reporting on progress.

Examples of activities have included:

- Writing group set-up with the intention of submitting a paper to a peer-reviewed journal;
- Conference planning and abstract submissions, for example to the [Fuse International Conference](#);
- Welcoming and learning from guest speakers. These learning opportunities are accessible to the wider Fuse and public partner networks too;
- Collaborative working to secure NIHR School for Public Health Research [Innovation in Involvement funding](#);
- Reviewing and refreshing the Fuse public involvement and engagement strategy;
- Contributing to regional discussions around public partner remuneration.

4. Membership

Membership will be for a defined period (e.g., 2 years), after which it will be reviewed. Current members include, in alphabetical order:

- Ella Anderson, Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement Manager, Newcastle University
- Victoria Bartle, PIEG Co-Chair and Fuse Public Partner
- Matt Capsey, Senior Lecturer in Paramedic Practice, Cumbria University
- Christina Cooper, Postgraduate Research Associate, Northumbria University
- Florence Darling, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Durham University
- Fiona Duncan, Research Associate, Newcastle University
- Pamela Graham, PIEG co-chair and Fuse PIE Lead; Assistant Professor in Community Wellbeing, Northumbria University
- Jim Greer, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, Cumbria University
- Lesley Haley, AskFuse Research Associate, Teesside University
- Vicki Harris, Health Equity and Involvement Manager, Connected Voice
- Jennifer Ironside, Fuse Public Partner
- Sadia Mir, Fuse Public Partner
- Anne Oakey, Principal Lecturer Urgent & Primary Care, Cumbria University
- Beth Reeves, VCSE Health & Wellbeing Research Partnerships Co-ordinator for the North East and North Cumbria, VONNE (Voluntary Organisations' Network North East)
- Agata Robertson, Fuse Centre Manager, Newcastle University
- Lesley Scott, Senior Lecturer, University of Sunderland
- Mehru-Nisa Shah, Haref Development Officer (Allies), Connected Voice
- Felicity Shenton, Public Involvement and Community Engagement Manager, NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North East & North Cumbria
- Mark Welford, Fuse Communications Manager, Teesside University
- Cheryl Wiscombe, Fuse Administrator, Newcastle University

5. Meeting Structure

- Meetings will be held four times a year (or as needed).
- Meetings will take place online via Zoom.
- Agenda items and supporting papers will be circulated in advance.
- Minutes will be recorded and shared as soon as they become available following review.

6. Decision-Making

- Decisions will be made by consensus where possible. Where consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote will be used (50% or more).
- The co-chairs have the casting vote in the case of a tie.

7. Reporting and Accountability

- The group will report directly to Fuse Centre Management Group (CMG) and the Fuse Centre Strategy Board (CSB).
- Progress reports will be provided to summarise key activities, outcomes, and recommendations.

8. Confidentiality and Conduct

- Members must respect confidentiality where sensitive information is discussed.
- All members are expected to adhere to Fuse's code of conduct, including promoting respect, inclusivity, and ethical standards in discussions.

9. Review of Terms of Reference

- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

10. Contact

- Contact Ella Anderson, Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement Manager for more information: eleonor.anderson@ncl.ac.uk.

11. Definitions

- **Public involvement** in research means research that is done 'with' or 'by' the public, not 'to', 'for' or 'about' them. It means that patients or other people with relevant experience contribute to how research is designed, conducted and shared. Public involvement is collaborative. We all work together to make sure that the skills, expertise, knowledge and experience of everyone involved, is used to ensure our work is the best it can be.
- **Public engagement** is when information and knowledge about research is shared with the public, using a range of activities. Public engagement activities can include science festivals, raising awareness of research through the media and sharing research findings.
- **Public partners** are members of the public who work with us. We are in a partnership and work together to get the best results we can.
- **Public Health Research** - Through scientific knowledge and evidence, public health research explores and evaluates interventions that can impact on health. Public health is about helping groups of people to be healthier so we live better, longer lives. It looks to improve the health and wellbeing of the public and reduce inequalities in health. Public health research covers a huge range of themes including healthy weight, substance use (alcohol, tobacco and drugs), infant feeding, universal credit, food insecurity, mental health, and much, much more.

Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement Group Code of Conduct

This code of conduct exists to ensure that co-chaired, researchers, public partners, colleagues and guest speakers involved in the Fuse Public Involvement and Engagement Group act in a courteous, welcoming and respectful way.

Our aim is for the group to be welcoming and accessible for members, whereby people involved feel included and treated with dignity and respect. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness is required.

To create a positive environment we will:

- Be respectful of differing viewpoints, opinions and experiences
- Use welcoming and inclusive language
- Show empathy, respect and kindness towards fellow group members
- Accept responsibility and apologise to people affected by our mistakes, and learn from the experience
- Understand there are times where there may be constructive criticism

Fuse will be responsible for monitoring discussions and behaviour (where reasonable), and will take appropriate and fair action in response to any cases of unacceptable behaviour (such as harmful or inappropriate behaviour) that is not in alignment with our code of conduct.

Comments and questions may be directed to fuse@ncl.ac.uk.

Attribution

This Code of Conduct is adapted from the [Contributor Covenant](https://www.contributor-covenant.org/version/2/1/code_of_conduct/), version 2.1, available at https://www.contributor-covenant.org/version/2/1/code_of_conduct/.