

# Strengthening health and care research by becoming a PPI member: Advice from our PPI members

- **Your voice matters.** You don't need to be an expert, your lived experience is valuable and brings new insight.
- **Take your time.** It's fine to listen, ask questions and learn the process - you're not expected to know everything at once.
- **Share in whatever way works for you:** email, meetings or one-to-one chats. There's no single 'right way' to contribute.
- **Ask for what you need.** Accessibility matters - whether extra time, clearer explanations, tech help or a slower pace, good teams will adapt.
- **Be a 'critical friend'.** Your role isn't just to agree - it's to support while also constructively questioning. Speaking up helps maintain trust and ensures research reflects real public needs.
- **Help make connections.** PPI is often about being the 'missing link', bringing together ideas, people and communities. Sharing knowledge and joining dots can spark real progress.
- **Speak for the wider public.** You don't have to share your personal health story. Your role can be to represent what others might experience and need - especially those whose voices aren't often heard.
- **Open the doors!** Your presence encourages openness, transparency and inclusion. You're helping research become something more people can trust and take part in.
- **Stay curious.** Your questions matter. They help challenge assumptions, widen understanding and make health research better for everyone.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Life and health can be unpredictable, and it's okay to step back, pause, and return when you're ready.

