



## SPCR funding for PPI activities final report

Please complete all sections of this report. We would like to publish these reports on the PPI pages of the NDPCHS website, so please ensure you do not include any details which could identify the PPI contributors you worked with, or disclose any personal or confidential information.

**Please briefly describe your project and the PPI activities that you carried out with this funding. What was the aim/purpose of your PPI activities? Did you do anything differently from how you planned? If yes, why was this? eg *Doing individual interviews instead of a group discussion* (max. 150 words).**

The primary aim of the PPI activity was to solicit public views on a forthcoming SPCR Post-Doctoral Fellowship application. The proposed project seeks to explore whether self-testing at home for symptoms of acute respiratory tract infection (RTI) could meet the needs of adult patients (18-65), parents of children aged between 1 and 5 years old, and prescribers in community care in England.

To achieve this, I conducted two one-hour online events with people who had experienced RTI symptoms within the last 6 months to gauge their thoughts of the project proposal (i.e., did they think this topic is important, do they see the value in the research for themselves individually/family/wider communities etc.); to gain feedback on any concerns contributors had about the research (i.e., unintended consequences, aspects of phenomenon I had not considered); and to seek out strategies to optimise the research approach.

**What was the impact of the PPI on your project? eg *Did it change or validate anything you will do?* (max. 150 words)**

The PPI activity impacted the research application in a number of key ways:

- The enthusiasm about this topic from contributors was very encouraging and lent support to the justification that this is an important research area.
- Contributors spontaneously identified a lot of the same questions that I have about the topic – this alignment of questions was validating.
- Contributors shared experiences, perspectives, and concerns of self-testing for RTI that I had previously not considered so these discussions have alerted me to different ways of thinking about the topic.
- Contributors' recommendation that efforts to target/diversify participant groups should be done so with intentionality has been taken forward into the application.
- The suggestion to 'take a step back' in particular encouraged reflection on what I was trying to achieve with the study and to make this more explicit in the application and during the second session that occurred later that week.

**What was the impact of the PPI on you? eg Did it make you think about anything differently? Did it increase your confidence at doing PPI? (max. 150 words)**

The PPI activity impacted me personally in a number of key ways:

- It encouraged me to think more deeply about the purpose and scope of the proposed research.
- It challenged me to communicate my research to a different audience and to adapt to suit their needs.
- Contributors registered opinions and experiences about the topic that I had not previously considered and will likely be important going forward.
- I had not done much formal PPI work previously and I really enjoyed the two PPI events and the discussions they elicited. Consequently, my confidence doing PPI has increased.
- I have also identified areas of learning and improvement for future PPI work. For example, during the first session I allowed contributors' discussion to continue almost to the end of the allotted hour, this meant that debriefing was rushed. In the following session I ensured to have sufficient time for debriefing.

**What was the impact of the PPI on your PPI contributors? (max. 150 words)**

Impact of sessions on contributors and other researchers has not been formally sought, but all have said to me directly that they were interested in this area, enjoyed the discussion, and would be interested in engaging with it further in the future.

**What are the next steps? (max. 150 words)**

Following the PPI activity:

- All contributors were thanked for their time and input during the session and in a follow-up email immediately after the session.
- Within three weeks of the session, I emailed contributors again to summarise the discussions and to signal what changes their recommendations and insights prompted in the final application, as well as wider learning I have taken from the sessions.
- When the decision of the funding is known (anticipated to be mid-late May 2024), I will email contributors to advise.
- Contributors also welcomed staying involved in this research, so should funding be awarded or a related study be in development, I will again reach out to contributors by email.
- If awarded the funding, I will also establish a means of recording contributor impact and feedback.

**Did you spend all the funding that you were awarded? If not, why not?**

Yes.

**Please also include a copy of the feedback you sent to your PPI contributors.**

Below is the email correspondence to contributors.

### **Feedback to PPI contributors:**

Greetings [name],

I apologise I didn't get in touch last week as I intended, but I myself have been suffering with a respiratory infection!

As promised on 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, I wanted to briefly follow-up to provide some updates and to share the learning and impact I have taken from our discussions on self-testing for respiratory illness on both a personal level and for the funding application. If you have any learning and/or impact from the session, then please do share this with me via email.

Note: I have combined discussion and learning from both sessions so not everything outlined will have been discussed/relevant to the session you attended.

### **Overview of sessions:**

- I was pleased that discussion flowed freely and respectfully throughout.
- We managed to cover a lot of ground, topics included but was not limited to (a) logistics of self-testing (ST) (comments about cost of tests, test types and processes), (b) access to ST with a particular emphasis on ensuring equitable access and not compounding existing health inequalities, (c) beliefs around antibiotics ('I'm not going to leave empty-handed'), (d) beliefs and experiences of ST (concerns around ST accuracy, confidence in doing tests, the legacy of Covid), (e) unintended consequences of ST (gatekeeping access to GP, possibility of increased GP visits, uncertainty over what to do post-test), and (f) reflections on if/how to target specific populations/groups.

### **My learning and impact:**

- The enthusiasm about this topic from you all was very encouraging and lent support to the justification that this is an important research area.
- You raised a lot of the same questions that I have about the topic – it was good to know that we are on the same page and want answers to the same questions.
- You shared experiences, perspectives, and concerns of ST for respiratory infections that I had not previously considered (for example, potential unintended consequences to primary care, experiences with Covid testing being traumatic for some) so these discussions have alerted me to different ways of thinking about the topic.
- Your recommendation that efforts to target/diversify participant groups should be done so with purpose has been taken forward into the application. I have made the argument that it would be better to target a specific community/communities informed by the research and further conversations with PPI contributors rather than trying to include absolutely everyone.
- The suggestion to 'take a step back' in particular encouraged reflection on what I was trying to achieve with the study and to make this more explicit in the application and during the second session that occurred later that week.

I really enjoyed the discussions we had, and from the feedback I received during and since the event(s), I believe you did too! I have now submitted the application that you contributed to and will be notified whether I have been successful in late May 2024.

As discussed, I will be sure to keep you up to date with progress on this application, and will let you know if we have any other opportunities for PPI work in this area in the future.

Thanks again, and best wishes, Caity