

Opportunity: Public Contributor Role

NIHR Doctoral Research Training Camp, 7th - 9th July 2026

Background

Each year, the NIHR runs a 3 day in-person doctoral research training camp for early career researchers who are undertaking their PhDs across NIHR. This is a 'safe space' for the delegates to learn and test out the skills they will need in the future for a successful academic career. In particular, we are aiming to nurture the skills they will require around the theme of 'Applying for further research funding'. There will be around 80 doctoral students in attendance from across NIHR Infrastructure, Schools, Incubators, and Research Programmes.

Delegates will be from a mix of professional backgrounds, including medical, basic science, allied health, nursing and midwifery, methodology, public health, and social work and care. The event includes presentations to set the scene on day 1, and then the attendees are placed into groups for days 2 and 3 to prepare an application and present to a fictitious funding panel with support from a mentor and public contributor. The groups have access to different 'experts' on day 2 to consult with on their proposals (methodological advisers, finance, PPIE, Programme Directors). For the purposes of the camp, we have created a fictitious research funding programme (The 'Living and Ageing Well research programme (LAWrp)') and the proposals the delegates prepare will have a public health and social care focus.

About the role

We are seeking patients, service users, carers or members of the public to embed within each of the mentored groups throughout the team activities. The aim of this involvement is to provide a more realistic experience of what it is like working with people and communities in the research planning and application process. We also

hope it will embed the principles of meaningful inclusion of patient and public involvement and engagement into their research training.

For some of the delegates, working with public contributors will be a new experience, so they may be unfamiliar with the benefits that working with people and communities can bring. It is important to remember that the delegates are in training and are learning about all aspects of research. This exercise is about giving the delegates a safe and supportive opportunity to experience what it can be like to have public and patient involvement in their project and to help them blossom into thoughtful and enthusiastic advocates of inclusion.

The embedded public contributors will work with their group during the main activity to prepare a proposal and then present to a funding panel, to ensure that working with people and communities is considered throughout the exercise. This role will be to support the group as they develop the proposal, as they would work with research teams in a real-world setting, by providing lived experience; i.e. working with them to justify the need for the project, to consider the key outcomes of the research, and the design of the project. Also, ensuring that the plain English summary is jargon-free and able to be read from a lay perspective, and communicating the importance of the project to patients and the public at the interview panel.

Each group is also assigned an academic mentor, whose role is to support the team whilst they are developing a suitable research question and helping to guide them in creating a plan to answer it. For the public contributor role, we would like them to work in a similar way to the mentor, by prompting the delegates, providing advice and guidance, but not leading them or giving them the solutions that they should find as a team.

Key details

Reimbursement:

£55 for the briefing session.

£495 for 3 days (£82.50 for two half days, mainly observing, and £330 for one full day where involvement is required within a team task).

£27.50 for a feedback meeting after the camp.

This will be an in-person meeting across 3 days:

- Tuesday 7th July: The event starts at lunchtime, with presentations which will provide a helpful background to the main group activity
- Wednesday 8th July: Group activity all day
- Thursday 9th July: Group presentations on the morning of day 3. The event closes at lunchtime.

What we are looking for:

- 10 individuals who are keen to support these early career researchers to develop their research and Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) skills.
- Individuals who have not been, and are not currently, involved in NIHR panels.
- Diversity of representatives (i.e. across backgrounds, geographies, and experience supporting early career researchers, etc).

Please note that we will not be offering places to those who have previously acted as a public contributor, to ensure that new eligible applicants have the opportunity to attend the training camp this year.

How to apply

If you are interested in being involved in the training camp team and helping to make this event a success, please submit an expression of interest to the NIHR by **1pm Thursday 30th April 2026**.

[Expression of Interest Form](#)

If you have any queries or would like to contact us directly regarding the role, please email icbs@nihr.ac.uk.

If there are any reasonable adjustments that we could put in place to support the submission of an expression of interest, during the event planning, or for attendance at the event, we would be more than happy to discuss this. Please contact us via the email address above, or by phone 0113 8315 945.

Role practicalities

Dates: 7th - 9th July 2026

Timing: The event will open with registration and lunch between 11-12.30 pm on Tuesday 7th July, and end at approximately 12.30 pm on Thursday 9th July.

Location: [Leonardo Hinckley Island Hotel](#), Watling St., Hinckley, LE10 3JA. ([map](#))

Training: We will provide you with an online briefing session in advance of the event, covering further details on the group activity and the public contributor role you will be undertaking. This session will be held on Wednesday 24th June 2026 11am - 1pm.

Support: There will be support available during the camp from NIHR PPIE colleagues. There will also be an opportunity to meet with the other public contributors and the academic group mentors for further peer support.

We will provide accommodation and food during the event and cover any additional expenses such as travel, care costs, or PA costs. Alcoholic drinks will not be included.

Draft programme:

Day 1: Tuesday 7th July 2026	
Time	Activity
11:00 - 12:30	Registration and lunch
12:30 - 12:45	Welcome
12:45 - 13:15	Introduction
13:15 - 13:45	'Developing your research question'
13:45 - 14:00	Break
14:00 - 14:30	Inspirational speaker
14:30 - 15:00	'How to Sell Yourself and Your Project'
15:00 - 15:30	Knowledge Mobilisation presentation
15:30 - 16:00	Break
16:00 - 16:30	Intro to the 'Living and Ageing Well research programme'
16:30 - 16:45	Previous attendee talk
16:45 - 17:30	Group time
17:30 - 19:00	Downtime
19:00 - 19:30	Networking

19:30	Dinner
Day 2: Wednesday 8th July 2026	
Time	Activity
09:00 - 09:30	Finance session
09:30 - 17:30	Group working
10:30 - 15:55	Appointment booking open
10:45 - 16:00	Expert Office appointments open
12:00 - 14:00	Working lunch available
17:00 DEADLINE	Application submission
17:30 DEADLINE	Presentation submission
19:00	Pre-dinner speech
19:30	Formal dinner
Day 3: Thursday 9th July 2026	
Time	Activity
08:30 - 09:00	All teams to attend main room BEFORE 9am
09:00 - 09:05	Introduction by panel
09:05 - 10:30	MPHrp advisory panel - Presentations
10:30 -10:45	Refreshments
10:45 - 12:10	MPHrp Advisory panel - Presentations
12:10 - 12:30	Closing remarks and panel deliberations
12:30	Winners announced and close of training camp
12:30 onwards	Grab and go lunch available