

Vocal Evaluation Strategy 2022/2027

Assessing the difference made by working together in health research.

Introduction

Vocal's 5-year strategy sets out our commitment to assess and understand the difference that patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) makes to research and all the people we work with.

Our strategy says:

We confidently demonstrate the difference that working together can make to research and to everyone involved.

We develop and apply robust ways to understand the changes that working together makes to research and to people's lives. We understand that these changes can occur in multiple and interlinked ways, for example:

- In relation to individual targeted research projects and studies.
- Across broad and large-scale programmes of research.
- As part of research culture and environments.
- At a personal level amongst researchers and research staff.
- At a personal level amongst public partners, including changes in confidence, agency and skills.

We show leadership in applying methods to assess change, and sharing our learnings, contributing to the evidence-base and legacy for future collaborative relationships in health research.

We seek to understand and evidence the change(s) that working together in research makes. We've heard that the term 'impact' is often understood in a variety of ways (across all our partners) and we'll ensure clarity in our approach and language related to the impact of working together.

What will be different in 5 years?

Everyone associated with Vocal can articulate, and point to evidence showing, the differences that working together in research has made or can make.



1. The outcomes we're working towards

Our evaluation strategy is focused on the outcomes for:

- Patients, community members, public audiences.
- Researchers and research staff.
- Community and voluntary organisation partners.
- Research & research institutions partners.

The diagram below indicates the outcomes that we might expect from PPIE across our stakeholders, together with some of the evaluation methods we'll use to assess the impact of PPIE and our work.

Our evaluation approach maps on to the Vocal values of Everyone Matters, Working Together, Driving Excellence and Innovating and their relevant objectives within our 5-year strategy.

What outcomes are we working towards?

Patients, communities, carers

- Feel heard & express agency in health research
- Benefit from their involvement
- Are supported to become involved
- Know what difference they've made to health research
- Are more aware of research, participation & involvement
- Feel that research institutions are more trustworthy

Researchers & research staff

- Feel more confident to do inclusive PPIE
- Do more & better PPIE
- Place more value on lived experience in research
- Increase their skills in the methods of PPIE
- Deepen their knowledge of how to collaborate with diverse communities in their research

Community and Voluntary Sector

- Includes diverse organisations & people from research, Community & Voluntary sectors, in line with Vocal's partnership strategy
- Benefit from their involvement
- Together, we share values, strategic aims & learning
- Report a good experience working with Vocal

Research & research institutions

- Are informed & influenced by people's lived experience
- Expect high-quality research to include PPIE
- Use appropriate PPIE methods
- Are more inclusive across the research cycle
- Are more relevant to diverse communities
- Are more trustworthy

We're clear that the evaluation of PPIE constitutes a service evaluation (the service being the delivery of effective PPIE provided by Vocal) and doesn't require ethical approval. This is in line with national guidance from the Health Research Authority.

We use a bespoke database (a Client Relationship Management system called Zoho) to support our evaluation approach. The use of our database is compliant with all GDPR requirements, including through regular review by our host organisation (Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust) Information Governance team.



2. How we evaluate our activities with people and organisations

2.1. Patients, communities, carers

PPIE activities

We'll record, on our bespoke database, how many people we work with and their demographic data:

- Across all our work
- As part of individual projects and programmes of work

This monitoring informs our work on an ongoing basis, and we'll report diversity data regularly, including as part of annual reports for the NIHR Manchester BRC and CRF and our host organisation, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust.

After every Vocal PPIE activity, we send out an evaluation questionnaire to the people who took part. The questionnaire includes Likert scale questions and questions requiring free text responses. Responses are anonymous. Respondents can leave their contact details if they want us to follow up with them.

Questions relate to:

- Their experience of the PPIE activity, including accessibility and inclusivity and relationship to health inequalities (Everyone Matters).
- What participants think will change in a research project, or amongst a research team, as a result of their input (Working Together, Innovating).
- What effect the activity has had on their future involvement and participation in research (Working Together; Everyone Matters).
- What worked well and what could be improved (Driving Excellence)
- Any training needed (Driving Excellence).

PPIE training

We'll record the number of training activities and how many people took part.

Where we've offered training and bespoke support, we'll evaluate the format and impact of the training, including:

- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Whether learning outcomes were achieved
- What worked well and what could be improved?
- Suggestions for further training opportunities

2.2. Researchers and research staff

PPIE activities

We'll record, on our CRM, how many activities have included researchers and research staff. This informs our work on an ongoing basis, and we'll report and review who we work with regularly.

After every Vocal PPIE activity involving a researcher or research staff, we send out an evaluation questionnaire. These include Likert scale questions and questions requiring free text responses. Responses are anonymous. Respondents can leave their contact details if they want us to follow up with them.

Questions relate to:

- The impact of PPIE on the research project and the researcher/research staff.
- Any new knowledge, confidence or skills gained as a result of PPIE.
- What worked well about the activity? What could be improved?
- Any training required.

PPIE training

As in section 2.1.



2.3. Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations

We'll record, on our database, the number and type of community and/or voluntary sector (CVS) organisations we work with:

- Across all our work
- As part of individual projects and programmes of work.

Monitoring our partnerships with CVS organisations informs our work on an ongoing basis. We'll report on CVS partnerships regularly, including as part of annual reports for the NIHR Manchester BRC and CRF.

Through formal and informal methods, we'll seek to understand:

- Their experience of working with Vocal, including considerations of accessibility, inclusivity and addressing health inequalities.
- Whether they have gone on to take part in other PPIE and/or research initiatives.
- The benefits and value of partnership working.
- Whether the ways of working were equitable.
- The impact of the partnership on the partner and/or the people they work with (e.g., Access to research, agency, capacity/skills development)?
- What worked well? What could be improved?
- Any unexpected consequences of PPIE/working with Vocal.

Where we've offered training and bespoke support to CVS organisations, we'll evaluate the difference the training has made (as in section 2.1.).

2.4. Research and research institutions

We aim to assess any culture change towards embedded PPIE within the research organisations that Vocal works with.

Through our database system and research and research staff evaluation questionnaires, we'll:

- Report the number of activities involving researchers and research staff.
- Across a research infrastructure and/or programme, the different stages of the research cycle where PPIE has been included.
- How many grant applications and projects/studies have received PPIE input.
- The difference that PPIE has made to research and researchers.
- Identify the diversity of methods used for PPIE.

Annually we'll carry out facilitated discussions with our partners (public, CVS, and research) involved in governance and strategy to:

- Understand the impact of PPIE within governance and strategic decision-making structures, including key decisions made as a result of public partner input.
- Capture the experience of joint decision-making among public and research partners, including as it relates to issues of parity of voice.
- Explore the differences PPIE makes to trust and trustworthiness.

3. Strategic and/or large-scale initiatives

Where Vocal is involved in strategic and/or large-scale initiatives, we'll agree at the outset and collaboratively amongst all partners, on an evaluation approach. This approach may draw on some of the methods above and will include, as a minimum, 6-monthly collaborative reviews, to support the delivery of the initiative. Criteria for impact will relate to Vocal values and 5-year ambitions (as outlined in our strategy), for example:

Everyone Matters

- How has this initiative been inclusive and accessible in its design and delivery?
- Analysis of diversity data
- How did this promote and embed inclusive research?

Working Together

- How many researchers, public contributors, community partners have been involved?
- How have people involved in decision-making?
- What has changed as a result of working together?

Innovating

- How was this innovative in its design, methods, content, output?
- What creative methods were used?
- What has changed as a result of being innovative?
- What impacts have been shared more widely?

Driving excellence

- What is the learning from this initiative and how will this be embedded?
- What has been the feedback from public contributors & researchers?
- What training & skills development has taken place?

4. Sharing our learning and improving our practice

As a Vocal team, we meet quarterly to review our evaluation data and act on the findings to improve our practice.

We systematically and routinely feedback on the impact of PPIE to public partners, CVS, and research organisations that we work with, including as part of funding and reporting requirements.

Annually, we'll evaluate and review our partnerships with our key public, CVS, and research partners, through joint discussions.

We'll continue to share our learning including through case studies, blogs, presentations, and peer-reviewed publications.

