

Guidelines on pay, rewards, and recognition for public involvement in the Policy Research Unit Children and Families

Introduction:

[The Children and Families Policy Research Unit](#) is one of 15 National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Policy Research Units that undertake research to inform decision-making by government departments and those that support their work, such as NHS England and Public Health England.

The Children and Families Policy Research Unit (CPRU) is committed to involving the voices, skills, and expertise of the public in our work. We are clear that those who take part in our research should be recognised, rewarded, and paid for their valuable and expert contributions.

For several years now CPRU has actively encouraged the involvement of the public in our research. The recognition, rewards, and payment policy exist as a guide to help researchers and the public to be aware of what options are available, the nature and level of the involvement, and to make sure that the personal needs of those taking part are properly considered.

How the public might be involved in our work:

In our programme of work, the public have contributed to our research in lots of different ways. Below are some examples of how the public have been involved in our work, but depending on the project, the time you have available and your experience these could be different. We will always train and support you to get the most out of being involved.

- Helping to develop and review research proposals
- Attending a meeting to share your views and ideas or to take part in a consultation
- Taking part in collaborative research
- Acting as a peer researcher to interview each other or facilitating focus groups
- Taking part in focus groups, one-to-one interviews, or surveys to share their views
- Supporting the analysis or interpretation of research results
- Helping to co-author reports, journal articles, or present findings
- Supporting us to make our events, research materials, and outputs accessible and inclusive

Benefits of involving the public in our work:

- Involving members of the public, makes sure we keep a tight focus on how the research being undertaken will benefit parents, children, young people, and service users.
- The public provides us with a unique perspective, for example drawing from their lived experience of health and wellbeing or use of health and other services
- When we listen to public views, our research improves, and we become sensitive to the needs, perspectives, and circumstances of the community; this makes our research more relevant and eventually improves the services available for future generations.

There are many ways in which we recognise the contribution of the public who support and participate in our research.

The reward of recognition will depend on the research project and the nature and level of input.

In the case of co-produced research, we will acknowledge public involvement as a co-author (adding your name to the report).

At the start of the research, we will always set out what can and cannot be paid, and how expenses will be reimbursed. We ask that you keep receipts or proof of expenses.

Below we outline and explain some of the ways that the public can be recognised for their contribution to our work.

Form of recognition	Definition	Additional details
Recognition:	The way in which we demonstrate that we value and appreciate the involvement of those taking part.	We aim to always share the visible changes made because of public involvement and acknowledge all input in research publications (either by referring to the involvement group or individual names.) Where appropriate we might also send out thank you letters, and certificates and provide references.

<p>Reward:</p>	<p>Giving those who participate something tangible that values their involvement.</p>	<p>Our primary means of reward for research participation is gift vouchers.</p> <p>Our preferred voucher is Love2Shop however we are open to individual needs and may offer other vouchers as an alternative.</p> <p>Love2Shop vouchers can be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping (ASDA, Sainsbury's, Iceland, Marks and Spencer and Clarks) • Food (Beefeater, Costa, Harvester, Pizza Hut, and Pizza Express) • Toys (Argos, The Entertainer, Waterstone, WH Smith) <p>If gift vouchers are being given to those under <18 years of age, we consider what can be purchased within that shop.</p> <p>When working with partner organisations we will follow their standard voucher policy, unless considered unsafe.</p> <p>Alternative rewards could include accreditation, access through the research to development opportunities, paid training that aids the participant's own personal development, tickets to an event, book, shopping vouchers, or phone top-up.</p>
<p>Payment:</p>	<p>An invited activity whereby a financial payment is paid in return for their involvement.</p>	<p>Sometimes it is more appropriate to pay members of the public for the time, rather than offering vouchers. This is particular for activities that take time and</p>

		<p>several hours of preparation e.g., meetings, workshops, etc.</p> <p>Payments are normally made a couple of weeks post involvement.</p>
Accessibility	Making sure that patient and public involvement is accessible to everyone	<p>We will always pay for reasonable expenses for an interpreter, palantypist, Personal Assistant, or Support Worker in addition to any reward or payment.</p> <p>We will support expenses in relation to caring or an additional financial expense that you would need to pay out because of your involvement, we will recompense these expenses in addition to any other reward or payment for involvement.</p>
Subsistence:	Where participants' involvement is face-to-face, we will also pay for reasonable travel and accommodation, and we will reimburse any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses to take part.	<p>Where appropriate we will book travel, and accommodation so participants are not out of pocket, or we will pay in advance. If it is not possible to do either of these, we will ensure expenses are paid promptly following involvement.</p> <p>If you require travel or accommodation and need this to be booked in advance and paid for, just let us know.</p> <p>We will support any reasonable administration costs that you need to pay out for like telephone, Wi-Fi, and postage. If it is expected that you will be required to pay for any such costs, this will be made clear in advance.</p>

Good practice:

- We will make sure that our researchers have a budget to meaningfully involve the public
- Participants will be clear about what they are being offered, and how they will be recognised, rewarded, or paid for their involvement
- Payments, incentives, and recognition will always be commensurate with the demands of the activity
- We will try to organise involvement at times and places convenient for as many people as possible (including evenings and weekends)
- We will ensure that participants are not financially worse off because of being involved in our research
- Recognition, rewards, and payments will always be fair and reasonable to everyone involved
- Participants should regularly receive feedback and the impact that their involvement has had on the research
- We will aim for public involvement to be accessible to as many people by planning ahead to address potential barriers to involvement. Where necessary we will consult with expert organisations to ensure we do this.
- We will always aim for public involvement to be stress-free and harm-free. This involves taking a trauma-informed approach and responding positively to feedback from members of the public
- We will always acknowledge public involvement in our work

Eligibility for payment:

CPRU will provide payments to participants where we are seeking specific advice and contributions to our research.

We will involve multiple groups and individuals and reach out to involve children, young people, parents, and professionals across England, including those with lived experience of domestic violence and abuse, mental health conditions, chronic conditions, and social care experience. When we are consulting pre-existing groups of children, young people, and parents, we will follow those guidelines on payments and rewards. Where these are lower than what we offer, we will negotiate with the organisation to increase these.

Recognition, rewards, and payments will always be fair for all involved. Alterations to payment should not be made unless someone asks for a specific change because of their own personal needs. We will not assume what recognition, reward, or payment would be best for a participant.

The impact of being paid for your involvement:

Being paid for your involvement is likely to have an impact on you if you are currently employed, unemployed, receiving benefits, or retired. Payments, including gift vouchers

that you receive, can be treated as earnings for benefits and tax purposes. So, it is important to consider your financial situation.

Participants who are receiving state benefits will need to make sure that their earnings and rewards do not have an impact on the benefits they receive.

Researchers must ensure that participants are not financially adversely affected by taking part in any research study. This must be considered ahead of any study or engagement activity and made clear to any participants before they take part.

If participants are concerned that a payment could risk their state benefits the following organisations have further advice:

- **Benefits Advice Service:** A free confidential service to support members of the public whose welfare benefits may be affected by payment for involvement. For more information on how to access this service, please contact the NIHR Centre for Engagement and Dissemination ced@nihr.ac.uk or call 020 8843 7117.
- [Payment guidance for members of the public considering involvement in research | NIHR](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#): You can find your local Citizens Advice either on the Citizens Advice website or by telephoning 0800 144 8848 (for England). Note that rules may be different in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. You can find links to your country's Citizens Advice service at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>.
- [Disability Rights UK](#): Information for those with disabilities and in receipt of benefits.
- [HM Revenue and Customs](#)
- [Department for Work and Pensions](#)

If you need a letter from us to explain your involvement, we can do this so you can share the work you are doing and seek guidance. An example letter and what to cover can be found [here](#). The researcher working with you will work with you to tailor your letter to your individual needs.

If a participant is self-employed, you should clearly state that they are responsible for their own tax.

Benefits guidance, National Insurance, and tax legislation change regularly, and it is important that those involved seek their own professional advice. CPRU accepts no liability for decisions made.

Working with young people:

If you are a young person working with us, you have additional rights. The Children Act (1989/2004) places a duty of care on organisations (such as CPRU) when we involve you.

As an organisation it is important that we are aware of when a young person can legally work and for how many hours. More information can be found [here](#). When we collaborate with a partner organisation that will engage a child or young people on our behalf, we will

always make sure children's and young people's rights are protected and upheld. Partners payments should mirror our payment, reward, and recognition policy, where they pay lower amounts, we will raise to match our best practice.

Payments for your time, skills, and expertise:

Please remember that public involvement in our research is your choice. We will never force any member of the public to take part, and if at any point they want to leave they are free to do so. A decision not to take part or to leave will not affect any future involvement in other research. We offer different rates to be involved in our work. The public can choose not to accept a payment, ask for a reduced payment, or donate to a charity of their choice. If the public leaves part way through the research your payment will be pro-rated.

CPRU has the following minimum honorarium payments:

- £16 For involvement in an activity such as reading, where we seek your views and ask for you to comment and share your views and ideas. This task should take less than half an hour of your time.
- £25 For involvement in a one-hour focus group where there is no preparation, but we are seeking your views, providing feedback on a proposal, or as part of a focus group.
- £50 For involvement which will require you to read information prior to an activity and take part in a focus group that will require you to provide feedback. This activity would be approximately two hours of your time for the entirety of the task.
- £75 For involvement which will need half a day of your time for the activity. This could be to be interviewed by a researcher or join a panel to share and influence the development of our work.
- £150 for taking part in a whole day event, this could be a committee meeting, panel or sharing your views at a conference.

In addition to the above we will also pay £5 for home office costs for meetings.

Taking part in training courses

We may offer to pay for your attendance at a training course up to the value of £150 for your attendance at the training course that we have asked you to attend. We will also cover any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for you to attend see our subsistence section above.

Payment methods:

Payments for the patient and public involvement will vary and as such setting out payment methods will depend on contribution, the needs of those taking part, and your preferred means of being paid, rewarded, and recognised.

Options can include a bank transfer, vouchers or payment through the partner organisation; our preferred voucher is [Love2Shop](#). Gift vouchers may be treated as earnings and so you will need to declare these in the same way as you would for any financial transfer. Where

cash payments are to be made these will be transferred electronically into your bank account via BACS transfer. We cannot make payments by cash or cheque.

Payments are normally made a couple of weeks post involvement.