

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Employment Status Guidance

Type of Activity	Employment Status Risk	Payment Guidance
<p>Research Volunteers & Participants in Research: Patients and healthy volunteers required to take part in tests, submit to measurements or be interviewed in order to collect research data for analysis. Typically they may respond to an advert for volunteers and there may be a high volume of respondents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers - not Employees or Workers • are only reimbursed for the individual's reasonable costs of participating in the trial or research, including costs of travel and subsistence 	<p>Check the Supplementary Guidance before proceeding to payments via Voucher (or in some cases the One-Off Payment Route)</p>
<p>PPI Activity example 1: Attending open public meetings or events that don't require prior preparation: Drop-in sessions, Open days, Seminars, Conferences (not presenting)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment status (of the public contributor): • Not employee/ worker; unlikely to have a formal contract 	
<p>PPI Activity example 2: Presenting at a conference, representing an organisation / research team and talking about the experience of being involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment status (of the public contributor): • Not employee/worker; unlikely to have a formal contract 	<p>Check the Supplementary Guidance before proceeding to One-Off Payment Route</p>
<p>PPI Activity example 3: Remote document review to assist researchers, such as, lay review of funding applications, research materials, plain English summary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment status (of the public contributor): • Typically not employee/ worker; unlikely to have a formal contract 	

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PPI Activity example 4:

One-off focused and time-limited research development activities / projects / initiatives, typically completed within a few months.

May include preparation and remote work between meetings, such as: meetings to inform research priorities; discuss funding applications; public perspective to research plans; participation in focus groups; help with an engagement or dissemination event.

- **Employment status (of the public contributor):**
- typically not employee/worker; unlikely to have a formal contract

PPI Activity example 5:

Ongoing involvement in a research project or in organisational governance, providing independent advice over a period of time.

Likely to include preparation and remote work between meetings.

Such as Public Contributor on: a research project; study steering committee / trial management group; organisation steering group or governance group.

- **Employment status (of the public contributor):**
- typically not employee/worker; unlikely to have a formal contract

PPI Activity example 6:

A full and equal member of the research project / organisation team, potentially carrying out research.

Such as: Public Co-Applicant on research project; User-led research; Co-researcher on a grant

- **Employment status (of the public contributor):**
- **Might need contract of employment depending on:**
- Person's role within the research project
- Who controls and directs the work?

Check the Supplementary Guidance, ensuring the **Red Flags** are considered **before** proceeding to One-Off Payment

If unsure contact IR35@sheffield.ac.uk

Contact IR35@Sheffield.ac.uk for advice and assessment **before agreeing to or processing any payment**

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Supplementary Guidance

This guidance is intended to help to support decision making in PPI, Service User Participation and across broader community engagement /co-production in the other Faculties. It is not a formal University Policy and care should be taken to assess individual circumstances.

The University needs to ensure that such ‘engagements’ and any associated payments as properly considered for Employment Status.

Consideration may also need to be given by the organiser to whether any payment may impact on an individual’s welfare benefits.

Further advice on Welfare Benefits and links for support [here](#):

Research Volunteers, or Participants in Research Studies (Research Volunteers):

Research Volunteers are members of the public who are required to take part in tests, submit to measurements, or be interviewed to collect research data for analysis as part of University Research. They are usually paid a small sum to cover out of pocket expenses and compensate them for the time spent (or given a low value voucher as a nominal acknowledgement). *Longer Clinical Studies may involve larger payments, but the actual activity remains purely voluntary and largely a data collection exercise.*

NB: Some Research Volunteers may be University staff members, but participation in the research is not part of their duties of employment, they participate in their own time, and are under no obligation to take part.

Expected Payment route: *Typically, departments arrange for Vouchers at Project level (in some cases direct cash or BACS payments are made to these types of volunteers)*

PPI NIHR Activity Examples 1- 5 (which could also be aligned to examples of Public Involvement in Research)

Closely related but different to Research Volunteers, is the use of people with “lived experience”, “lay” people or “service users” in research. They are often former or current patients or represent communities. They receive payment for their participation in the meetings, workshops or for commenting remotely on documents/research plans.

Involvement in Research activities should not be mistaken as capacity for work, and *recruitment for service user involvement* should not be confused with *recruitment for employment*. Individuals are involved because of their personal experiences of living with a health condition or using health and social care services.

Principles of Public Involvement:

- are intermittent and people can withdraw at any time,
- vary in length and in frequency, and usually last for a few hours (or less) in any one week
- are individual activities and do not imply future involvement
- may include attendance of quarterly or annual meetings
- may include contributing to intermittent meetings or telephone conferences

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- may include helping to prepare for meetings, telephone conferences or events
- may include some follow-up activities after meetings or events
- payment that is offered is intended to cover preparation, attendance and appropriate follow-up activities. It should only cover what is needed to meet the reasonable costs of travel to undertake the activities and a small sum to compensate them for the time spent supporting the research

Red Flags (if any of these are YES, or if you have queries or concerns, please contact IR35@sheffield.ac.uk for help):

- Is it regular/high volume? E.g. more than 6 meetings per annum or a large amount of work for a high fee?
- Do any of the activities appear more like 'work tasks' for the University rather than participation? E.g. Are we expecting a certain standard, setting deadlines akin to 'work' or a 'service'?
- Is the [sum](#) (see NIHR guidance) paid to the Volunteer or Public Contributor excessive or higher than that of the NIHR guidance? Or described as a wage/salary.
- Is there a mutual obligation for the University to offer the activity to the individual and an expectation that they would have to accept and undertake an activity.
- Is it combined with any other PPI activities as well, e.g. on multiple grants? This could inadvertently impact on the amount and frequency of payments.

Expected Payment route for PPI Activity 1-5:

These public contributors or participants are not typically considered to be **workers or service providers** and should be paid Off-Payroll through the One-Off Payment Form describing the PPI activity and by ticking the PPI box.

For PPI Activities 1-5 the University's Off Payroll Team should not need to make any further assessment providing that Engaging Managers/Project Lead have considered the signposting and guidance. *If you are unsure you should take advice from the **Off-Payroll Working Team** IR35@sheffield.ac.uk*

[PPI NIHR Activity Example 6 - PPI Co-Applicant /Community Co-Applicant](#)

These activities have a higher risk of being that of an Employment relationship.

An assessment should be undertaken by the Off-Payroll Working Team before any payment is made to determine the correct relationship status between the University and the Individual.

You should complete and submit the details [Here](#)

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Supplementary Guidance

To Note:

This guidance is drafted to accompany the above signposting.

It has been drafted by University Tax Team and SCHARR, based on interpretation of guidance as laid out by HMRC and NIHR.

For further background, explanations of the roles which may be undertaken as part of public involvement in NIHR research roles can be found through this [link](#)

Explanations of the NIHR public involvement activity categorisations can be found [here](#), and guidance on payment amounts [here](#)

NB: We can't offer any personal advice to Research Volunteers or Public Contributors relating to their own personal tax or the what the implications of receiving any kind of funds may have any Benefits. It is acceptable for participants/public contributors to decline any offer of expenses if they wish.

The tax consequences of these engagements, for the University and the individual volunteers is set out at:

<https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim71105> and

Further advice on Welfare Benefits and links for support [here](#)