

Public and community involvement and engagement in research at UHSussex: Our strategic plan





Image acknowledgement: Artwork from mural in Louisa Martindale Building developed as part of the Crucible project, in collaboration with Daniel Locke and Strike-A-Light Arts and Heritage, and the Nimbus Group.

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1. Executive summary

Our hospitals are at the heart of the communities they serve, providing excellent care for our patients and helping people to live well and thrive. Our Trust strategy for 2025-2030 - '[Excellent Care Everywhere](#)' sets out [Excellent care for the future](#) ambition to be a regional research leader – as a centre of research excellence, widening patient and community access to research. The Trust strategy also sets our ambition to provide [Excellent care for communities](#), collaborating to improve services, pathways and patient experience.

Research helps improve treatments, services, and health outcomes. To make sure research addresses the needs of the people it is intended to benefit, patients, carers, service users, and communities must have opportunities to help shape it. This is known as Public and Community Involvement and Engagement (PCIE). PCIE means working with people, not just researching about them. It ensures that research is relevant, inclusive, and focused on the issues that matter most to our communities.

This strategic plan sets out how University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust will strengthen Public and Community Involvement and Engagement in research between 2026 and 2030. Our vision is for research to be shaped by the voices, lived experiences, and priorities of the diverse communities we serve, helping to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities.

We know that some communities are less likely to be involved in research and may face barriers to participation. We are committed to working alongside local communities, voluntary and community organisations, and regional partners to ensure that more people have opportunities to influence research and take part in studies. Focus will be given to reaching people who experience the greatest health inequalities and who are currently underrepresented in research.



Our strategy has two main priorities:

- **Building a stronger culture of involvement in research,** by supporting researchers and public contributors with training, resources, support, recognition, and opportunities to work together.
- **Widening involvement and participation across our communities,** by developing trusted community partnerships, increasing diversity in research involvement, and improving access to research opportunities.

We are committed to ensuring that people who contribute to research feel welcomed, supported, listened to, and valued. We will provide fair recognition and payment where appropriate, remove barriers to involvement, and make information accessible to people with different needs and preferences.

We will also ensure that contributors and research participants receive meaningful feedback about how their involvement has influenced research and what difference the research has made. We will share information in clear, accessible ways and use what we learn from feedback to continually improve.

By 2030, we want to see more diverse communities involved in shaping research, greater participation in research studies, stronger community partnerships, and clear evidence that public and community involvement is helping to improve research quality, relevance, and impact. Together, we aim to create a culture where research is part of everyday healthcare and where communities are active partners in improving health and care for everyone.

This strategic plan is underpinned by our values of being inclusive, collaborative, supportive, open to learning, and focused on making a positive impact.



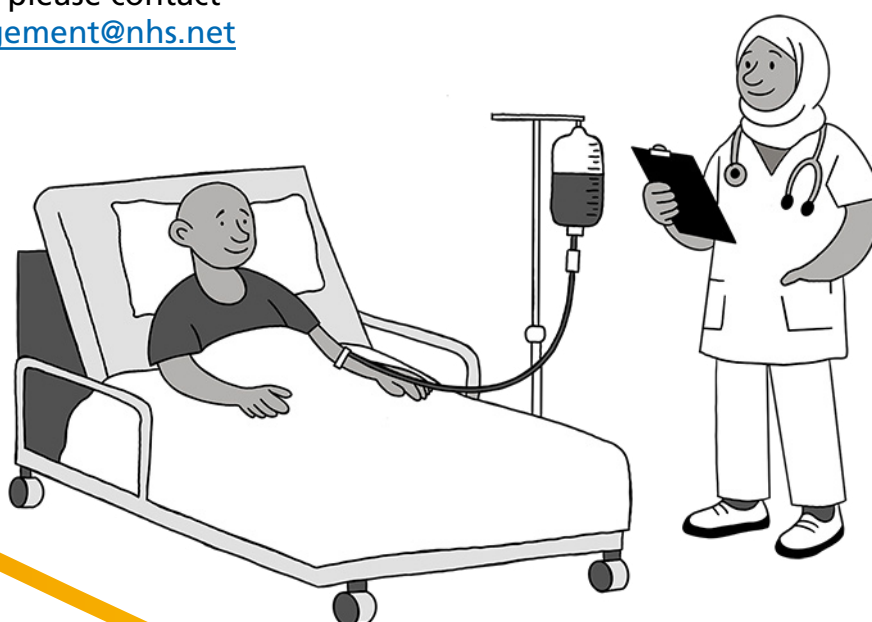
2. Developing this strategic plan

The strategic plan has been developed building on the work and guidance of the Trust's Research Engagement Group, Research Champions Group, and our NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research) Commercial Research Delivery Centre (CRDC) Sussex's Public and Community Involvement and Engagement (PCIE) Stakeholder Group. Our thanks for helping to develop research go to all our public contributors.

As a host organisation for the NIHR Commercial Research Delivery Centre: Sussex (NIHR CRDC Sussex), this Institutional PCIE Strategic Plan has been developed in line with NIHR and national guidance ([Improving how we partner with patients, carers and the public | NIHR, Research Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027 | NIHR, UK Standards for Public Involvement](#)), it covers our PCIE ambition for the Trust and the CRDC and will extend to cover any further NIHR infrastructure awards.

We work closely with the Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network (REN) to promote diverse community research engagement, involvement and participation. Our plans will continue to be developed and aligned with future regional PCIE strategies including other NIHR regional infrastructure partners including the NIHR South East Regional Research Delivery Network (RRDN), the Applied Research Collaboration – Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC), and the Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership to ensure sustainable and coherent PPIE activities and community, Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partnerships.

For further information please contact uhsussex.researchengagement@nhs.net



3. Definitions

We describe public and community involvement and engagement in research (PCIE) using the NIHR definitions.

PCIE can sometimes be referred to as PPI (Patient and Public Involvement) or PPIE (Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement). At UHSussex we will use the term Public and Community Involvement and Engagement (PCIE) as our preferred term which both recognises the importance of seeing people as individuals, rather than as patients or service users, and also recognises the important role that communities play locally.

What is patient and public involvement in research?

Everyone benefits from research. This not only includes scientific research in laboratories but also research into health and social care. Research provides evidence about what works best.

Patients, carers, people who use social care services and health and social care professionals all use this evidence to make decisions about treatments and care.

When the public gets involved in research, they work alongside researchers to help shape:

- what research gets done
- how it's carried out
- and how the results are shared and applied in practice

Being involved is not the same as taking part in a trial or study to test a new treatment or care option. It's about being a member of the research team that works together to design and run the study.

We define public involvement in research as research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them.

When we use the term 'public', we are including:

- patients and potential patients
- carers and people who use health and social care services

Public involvement in research | NIHR

What is community involvement and engagement?

Community involvement and engagement refer to the processes and practices by which individuals and groups within a community actively contribute to, and influence, the research process. These terms emphasise partnership working between researchers, community members and stakeholders, and are aimed at improving the relevance, value and conduct of health research.

[Guiding Principles for CEI | NIHR](#)

What is research participation?

We define research participation as individuals, often called research participants or volunteers, giving formal consent to take part in a study, trial, or investigation to provide data, such as testing a new treatment or answering surveys. It is distinct from public involvement, which involves people in the design and management of research.

4. Our mission

Research and innovation are central to improving healthcare. They give patients access to the latest advances in treatment, help ensure care is safe, effective, and good value, and improve outcomes for everyone - not just those taking part in research.

They also give patients, carers, and communities a stronger voice in shaping healthcare, while helping us attract, develop, and retain skilled, motivated staff. For these reasons, the Trust has placed research and innovation at the heart of its strategy for delivering high-quality care now and in the future.

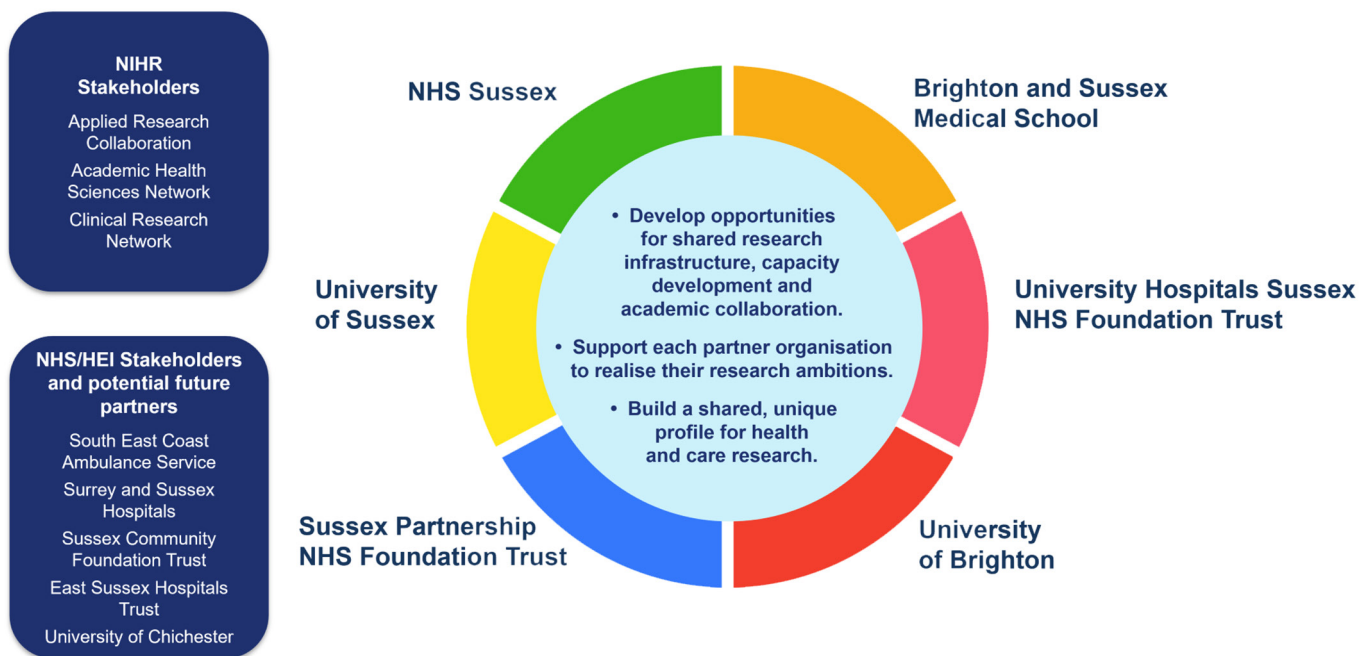
It is essential that our research is driven by the needs of and in collaboration with patients, service users, carers and communities at every level and that we work with the many fantastic Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations across Sussex that know and support our communities. This strategic plan has been developed to reflect our Trust's ambition to be inclusive and diverse in the way we work with patients and communities to develop and deliver research.



5. Partnership and collaboration

UHSussex is among the largest teaching hospital trusts in England and takes pride in its strong commitment to collaborating with local system partners as a Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership (SHCRP), including social care, to enhance health outcomes through research and innovation. This collaborative approach supports a shared mission of improving lives by advancing prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and recovery through high-quality research.

The Brighton and Sussex Health Research Partnership



In 2025, the Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership, working closely with the former Sussex Integrated Care Board and a wide range of partners, launched the *Improving Lives Together Through Research Strategy* [Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership - BSMS](#). This five-year plan sets out a shared vision for how research across Sussex will support better health, better care, and more responsive services for local people.

Public involvement and community collaboration have been central to this work from the start. The SHCRP's Patient and Community Advisory Group has played a key role in shaping the Partnership's development and ensuring community voices influence decisions.

The Partnership also hosts the Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network (REN), which brings together community organisations, researchers, and health and care partners to strengthen public engagement in research. Supported by national funding and infrastructure funding from UHSussex and partners, the REN works to build trusted relationships with communities, widen access to research opportunities, and promote inclusive involvement and participation in line with NIHR's [Guiding Principles for CEI | NIHR](#).

Together, these collaborations create a strong foundation for a PCIE strategic plan that puts people and communities at the heart of research in Sussex.

The Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network (REN)

UHSussex works with the Surrey and Sussex REN to help more people from different communities to take part in health and care research. By ensuring that research reflects the needs of a wider range of people, the REN supports better outcomes for communities across Surrey and Sussex. A key focus of the REN's work is engaging with communities who are less likely to be reached by health and care research, to ensure that the benefits are inclusive and equitable.

The Surrey and Sussex REN brings together local organisations including universities, hospitals, GPs, councils, voluntary sector and community groups. We are working together so that research is easier for communities to understand and join. Building long lasting, trusting relationships with our communities is a core part of the REN.

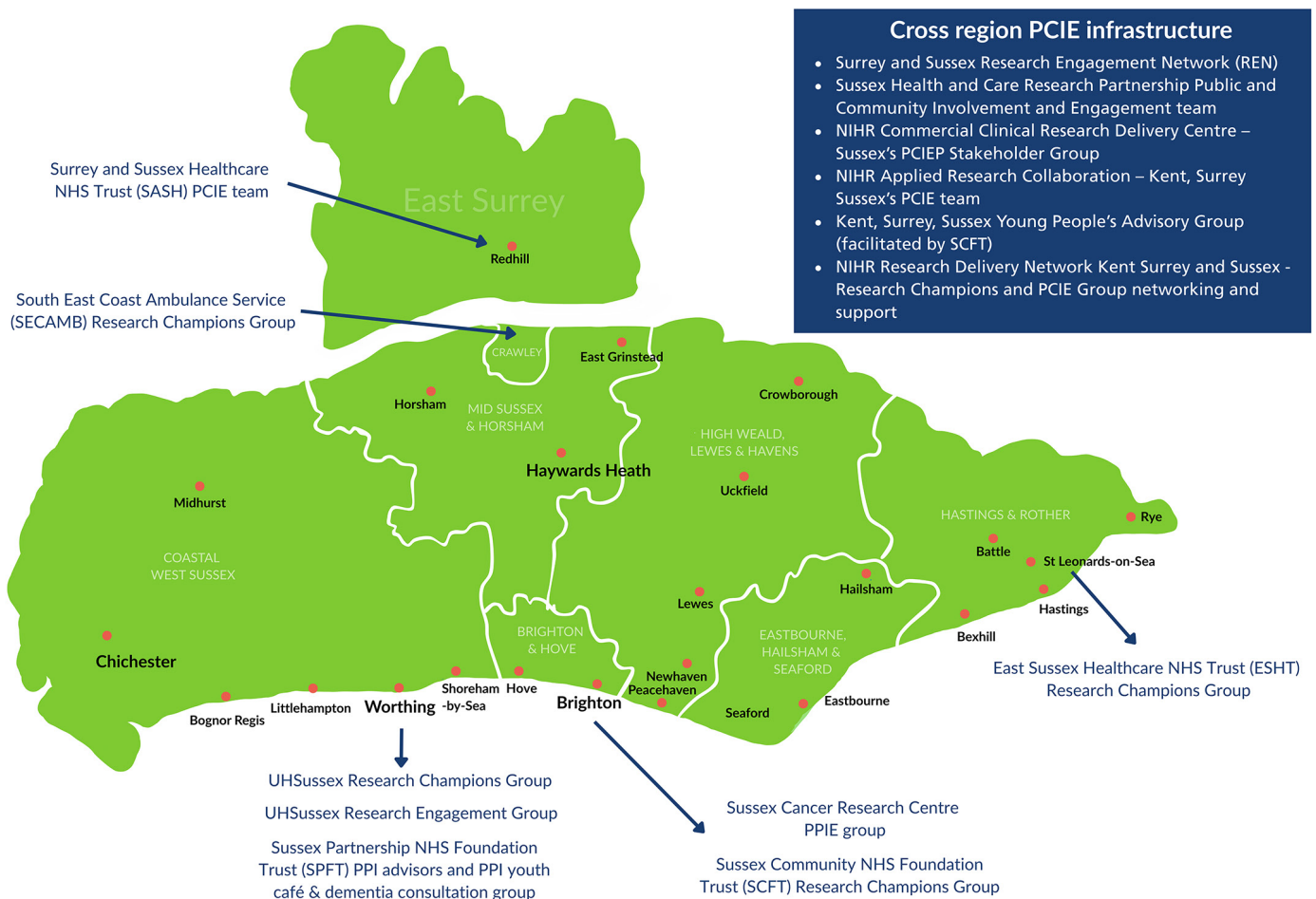


Regional PCIE in Research Groups

There are a number of PCIE in research groups across our Sussex regional partnerships. These include NHS Trust PCIE groups such as the UHSussex Research Engagement Group, groups working with a particular demographic group such as the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Young People's Advisory Group, those focused on a specific condition such as the Sussex Cancer Research Centre PCIE group, and NIHR infrastructure PCIE groups such as the NIHR South East Regional Research Delivery Network Champions Group, NIHR Commercial Clinical Research Delivery Centre – Sussex's PCIE Stakeholder group, and the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration – Kent, Surrey and Sussex's PCIE team.

We are working to ensure that regional research PCIE opportunities are clearly communicated to our community, and PCIE activities are managed and resourced to the same standards of good practice. The NIHR Research Delivery Network Kent Surrey and Sussex provides networking and support to our local PCIE groups.

The Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network is a key collaboration in ensuring that community research engagement activities and VCSE relationships are developed and supported in an inclusive, sustainable and consistent way.



6. Our vision

Our purpose

Our purpose is to ensure research improves health for everyone by involving everyone - removing barriers, reaching underrepresented local communities, and ensuring our work reflects the diversity of the people we serve so those with the greatest needs benefit most.



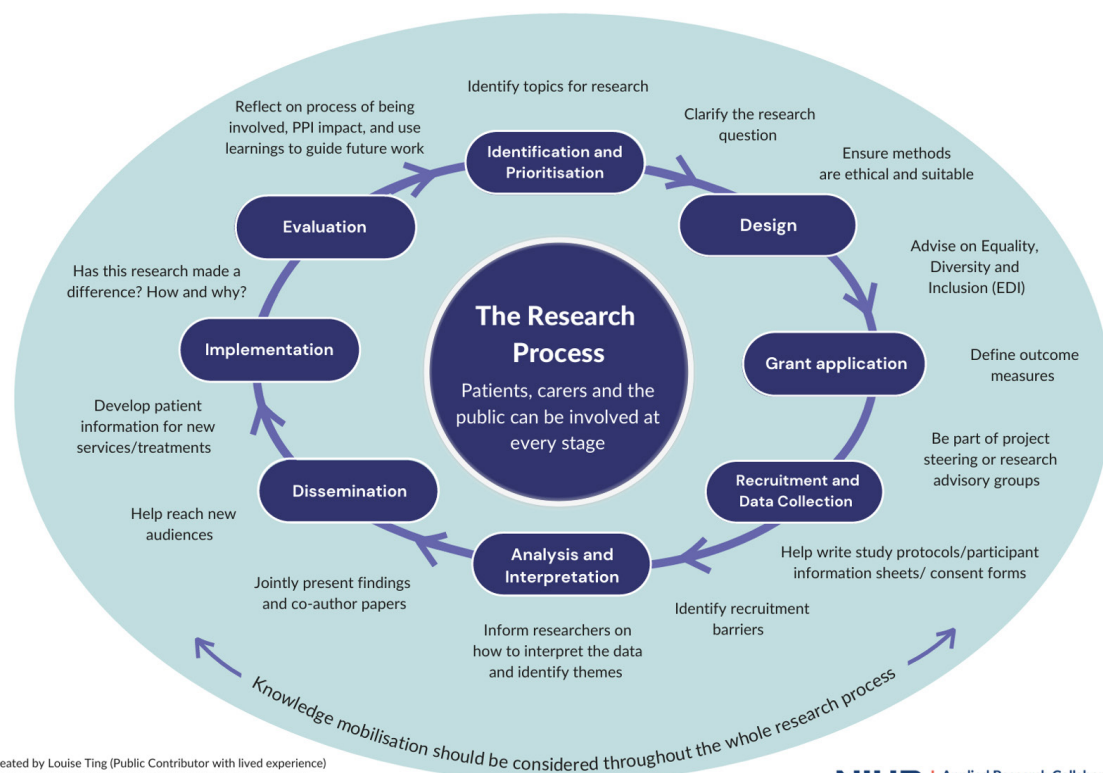
Research benefits everyone. This includes not only scientific research in laboratories, but also research into health and care services. Research helps us understand what works best and how we can improve care, services, and health outcomes for patients and communities.

Patient and public involvement and engagement (PCIE) means working together with patients, carers, and community members throughout the whole research process. This should happen at every stage - from coming up with ideas and designing projects, to sharing results - to make sure research is relevant, inclusive, makes a real difference, and is implemented to benefit the community.

There are many ways people can get involved in research at UHSussex, including:

- Joining groups that help guide and shape research decisions.
- Taking part in PCIE groups and workshops to share experiences and ideas.
- Encouraging and promoting research in local communities as a Research Champion or Community Connector.
- Reading and commenting on research plans and funding applications.
- Helping researchers learn how to involve patients and communities in their work.
- Joining advisory groups for research projects.
- Working alongside researchers to help design and deliver projects.
- Becoming a Community Researcher.

By listening to and involving people with lived experience and different community perspectives, research becomes more meaningful, accessible, and better able to improve care and health outcomes for everyone.



Created by Louise Ting (Public Contributor with lived experience)
Funded by NIHR ARC West and with support from colleagues
<https://arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/working-effectively-with-public-contributors/>

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration West

7. Our PCIE values

Six values underpin our patient and public involvement and engagement in research.

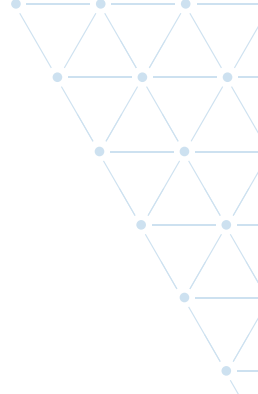


We are diverse and inclusive and equitable

- We are understanding of each other's background and value everyone's lived experience equally.
- We look to see whose voices are not in the room and actively seek to be more diverse and inclusive through community involvement and engagement.
- We are flexible in how we work together to support the needs of our diverse communities.

We are collaborative

- We work in partnership to shared purpose and goals.
- We try to build equitable, transparent and mutually beneficial relationships.
- We take time to actively listen, respect and understand the perspectives of communities and research collaborations.



We work as a team

- We work to build trust through transparency, accountability, open communication.
- We respect confidentiality.
- We listen to and learn from each other.
- We are welcoming, kind and respectful.

We support each other to contribute fully

- We support each other to contribute fully through knowledge, access, remuneration, recognition, peer support and flexibility in the way we work.
- We regularly review and evaluate our contribution so that we can learn and develop.

We learn

- We look for new and innovative ways to engage with communities
- We seek feedback and evaluate what has worked
- We learn from others and evidence based best practice

We have impact

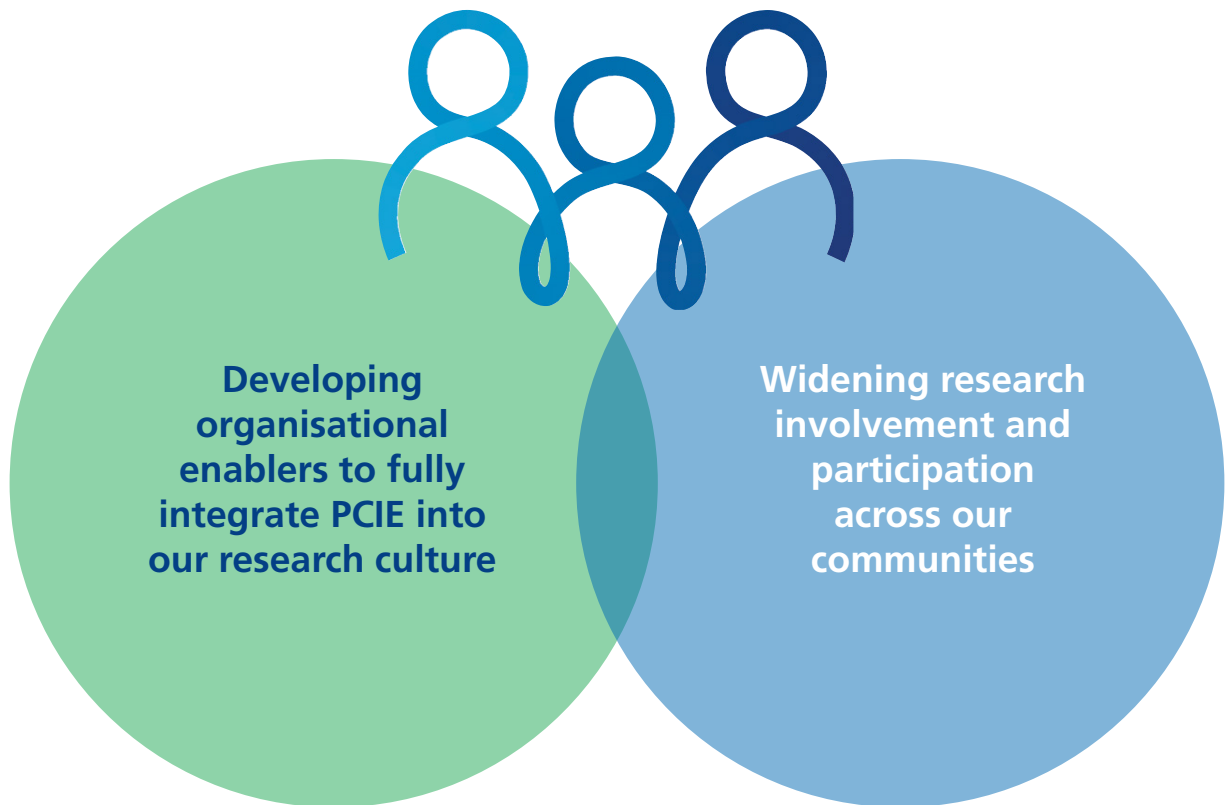
- We are clear about our objectives and how we will measure the impact of our work.
- We share and feedback the impact of research in an inclusive and accessible way.
- We share how research can benefit communities - preventing ill health, improving care and services, developing future treatments and offering hope.



8. Our areas of strategic focus

We will focus on two strategic priorities.

1. Developing our organisational enablers to fully integrate patient and public involvement and engagement into our research culture - by building PCIE capability and capacity so that PCIE is an integral and valued part of our research processes.
2. Widening research involvement and participation and strengthening equity across our communities to ensure the communities we involve in research are representative of people who face the biggest health challenges.



8.1 Developing organisational enablers to fully integrate PCIE into our research culture

Challenge:

PCIE is not yet fully integrated into our research culture meaning its influence can be limited.

Our ambition:

We want to build PCIE capability (knowledge, skills and confidence, and capacity (opportunities and structures) so that PCIE is an integral and valued part of our research process.

What we need to do	How we will do it
Build PCIE capability	Enhance our training for researchers to include more opportunities to learn about PCIE methods, including trauma informed practices, and how to design inclusive research (working in collaboration with REN to build on existing coproduced and co-delivered training). Co-create a toolkit to support staff with planning and integrating PCIE throughout a project lifecycle Co-produce training and development plans and resources to enable members of the public to fully participate in PCIE roles and activities.
Build PCIE capacity	Increase Research Champion roles, widen diversity of community representation. Develop and embed consistent support arrangements so that we include a more diverse range of public contributors. Co-create accessible research engagement materials. Ensure that PCIE contribution and activity is appropriately resourced, remunerated and recognised. Maximise the use of patient facing digital health records and other digital channels to communicate and engage about research.

Ensure PCIE is integrated into research leadership and governance	Ensure PCIE plans and activities are visible, and routinely discussed and reviewed in research leadership groups Ensuring annual reporting on progress against PCIE strategic plan at the Research and Innovation & Digital Committee Formalise current operating procedures for PCIE in Research into clear guidance under the Research Policy.
Share the impact of PCIE	Ensure members of the public shaping research routinely receive accessible and inclusive feedback on the progress and impact of the research, and on the impact of their contribution made. Ensure PCIE impact is reported and showcased as part of the communication plan.



8.2 Widening research involvement and participation across our communities

Challenge:

The communities we involve in PCIE are not yet representative of people who face the biggest health challenges.

Our ambition:

We want to widen and strengthen community collaborations supporting inclusive PCIE and research participation.

What we need to do	How we will do it
Diversify our PCIE	Co-creating a diversity monitoring approach for our PCIE. Increase representation from underserved communities by working with voluntary and community sector partners. Including clear impact measures and evaluation and feedback stages in all our PCIE activities.
Work in partnership	Work in partnership with the Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network (REN) and other regional research infrastructure, such as the NIHR Applied Research Collaborative – KSS (ARC) to ensure sustainable and coherent PCIE activities and community, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partnerships.
Reducing health inequalities through research access and inclusive research participation	Broadening our research portfolio to offer more research opportunities across clinical specialties and conditions reflecting regional health priorities. Put in place systems to routinely monitor and benchmark our research participation against regional demographic data. Prioritise underserved community engagement working with voluntary and community sector partners. Ensuring the needs, priorities, and lived experiences of diverse communities are reflected in research recruitment approaches. Increasing community sign up to NIHR Be Part of Research. Ensuring research participation is a positive experience and we respond to feedback.

9. From strategy to action

9.1 Key success measures

Our vision for success and how we will measure our progress is set out below.

Our ambition: We want to build PCIE capability (knowledge, skills and confidence) and capacity (opportunities and structures) to support.

What will success look like by 2030?	How will we measure success?
Public members will feel able to fully participate in PCIE roles and activities.	Robust co-created evaluation methods for all PCIE activities
All locally led studies will have high-quality PCIE in line with national guidance, and inclusive designs.	Evidence of early involvement of people with relevant lived experience, and public review of plans and design of new research studies.
We will routinely use co-created accessible research engagement materials	Positive community feedback and evaluation
We will routinely use patient facing digital health records and other digital channels to communicate and engage about research.	Opt in data for receiving information about research, numbers of research communications, patient feedback, research engagement survey.
All PCIE contribution and activity will be appropriately resourced, remunerated and recognised.	All PCIE activity is resourced, remunerated and recognised in line with NIHR standards.
Processes for support and protection of public contributors to research will be formalised in a clear guidance document – ‘PCIE in Research’ under the Research Policy.	Guidance document in place by April 2027. Public contributor feedback is routinely sought and acted on.

PCIE will be reflected on Research and Innovation Leadership and Steering Group agendas as standard.	Annual review of meeting agendas and minutes.
Members of the public shaping research will receive accessible and inclusive feedback on the research progress and outcomes, and on the impact their contributions made.	All engagement activities to have evaluation and feedback stage. Locally led research study PCIE plans will include accessible and inclusive feedback process.
We will routinely measure, report and showcase PCIE impact.	We will measure PCIE impact using published tools and frameworks. PCIE impact will be central to research communications, annual reports and annual events.



9.2 Widening research involvement and participation across our communities

Our ambition: We want to widen and strengthen community collaborations supporting inclusive PCIE and research participation.

What will success look like by 2030?	How will we measure success?
Our PCIE will be diverse and represent underserved communities.	Co-creating a diversity monitoring approach in our PCIE.
We will have increased and broadened the diversity of 'Research Champions' and collaborated with other research Champion Groups across the region.	Increase the number of active Research Champions to ~ 35 and widen diversity of community representation.
Our community engagement will have impact - ensuring the needs, priorities, and experiences of diverse communities are reflected in research recruitment approaches.	All activities to include impact measures and evaluation and feedback stage. We will develop mechanisms for two-way communication and feedback that are ethical, sustainable, and mutually beneficial.
Working in partnership with the Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network (REN) and other regional research infrastructure we will have ensured sustainable and coherent PCIE activities and community, VCSE partnerships.	Sustained REN with clear impact - coherent PCIE activities and community, VCSE partnerships.
We will have increased research access and inclusive research participation.	Increase % of research participants from most deprived areas (Indices of Multiple Deprivation - IMD 1&2) so reflects regional population deprivation data.
We will have increased community research engagement and participation.	Increase regional sign up to Be Part of Research rate. Increase UHSussex research participation.
We will routinely measure research participant experience and act on feedback.	NIHR My Research Experience Survey.

9.3 What will successful public and community collaboration look like?

As public and community contributors to research this is how we will measure our success:

- We are able to bring our experiences to help research become more meaningful, accessible, and better able to improve care and health outcomes for everyone.
- We work in partnership with VCSE and community organisations to ensure meaningful collaboration and engagement.
- Our involvement is a positive experience where we feel valued, heard and have impact, we are supported to be involved, and have regular opportunity to feedback about our experience of involvement.
- We are clearly contributing to increasing levels of staff, patient, public and wider community understanding of what research is and its role in improving health, and trust in research.
- We support increasing research participation and access to new treatments and work to ensure the needs, priorities, and lived experiences of diverse communities, especially underserved groups are reflected in research participation.
- We are helping to foster an inclusive, research-positive culture at UHSussex where patients, the public, communities, and staff collaborate to make research part of everyday practice.
- We work collaboratively with partners across the region to make sure our PCIE activities are sustainable and make best use of resources. We build on work that has gone before.
- We support and educate developing clinical, academic and community researchers to make sure that we are helping to build their PCIE capability for the future.
- We are transparent and clear about our involvement and measure the impact it has.

9.4 Our commitment to feedback

Meaningful feedback is an essential part of Public and Community Involvement and Engagement. It helps people understand how their contributions and public voices have influenced research and decision-making. Providing feedback shows that people's time, experiences, and perspectives are valued, demonstrates how involvement has made a difference, and helps build trust and lasting relationships with our communities.

Feedback is also important for research participants. People who take part in research often want to know what was learned from the study, how their participation contributed to the findings, and what impact the research has had. Sharing study results helps recognise participants' contributions, promotes transparency, and increases public confidence in research and willingness to participate in studies.

We are committed to providing timely, accessible, and meaningful feedback to both PCIE contributors and research participants.

We will keep people informed about how ideas, experiences, and suggestions have shaped research projects and decisions, and we will share study findings and outcomes. Information will be provided in clear, easy-to-understand language and through a range of formats, such as summary reports, newsletters, events, presentations, digital communications, and community meetings, to meet different needs and preferences.

We value lived experience and public voice as important forms of expertise and will treat everyone who contributes with respect, ensuring their time and input are recognised and appropriately rewarded where appropriate. We will take time to actively listen, respect and understand the perspectives of communities and research collaborations. We will develop mechanisms for two-way communication and feedback that are ethical, sustainable, and mutually beneficial.

By providing honest, regular, and meaningful feedback, we aim to strengthen trust, encourage ongoing involvement in research, and ensure that research remains relevant, inclusive, and beneficial to the communities we serve.

9.5 Our commitment to impact

We want to understand whether Public and Community Involvement and Engagement is making a positive difference to our research and to the people and communities involved. This means looking at how public and community input has helped shape research, improved the experience of those taking part, increased inclusion and representation, and strengthened relationships between researchers and communities.

We will gather feedback from contributors, community partners, researchers, and research participants, and use examples and stories alongside simple measures to understand what is working well and where we can improve. We will use this learning to continuously strengthen our approach to PCIE.

To support this, we may use recognised tools and frameworks, including:

- GRIPP2 (Guidance for Reporting the Involvement of Patients and the Public), which helps researchers record and report how people have been involved in research and the difference their involvement has made.
- PiiAF (Public Involvement Impact Assessment Framework), which helps researchers plan, assess, and reflect on the impact of public involvement throughout a project.

By regularly reviewing the impact of PCIE, we will ensure that involvement remains meaningful, inclusive, and beneficial for both research and the communities we serve.



10. Supporting Public and Community Involvement and Engagement

10.1 Helping researchers involve the public in research

Research at UHSussex must be conducted in line with the Trust's Clinical Research Policy. For all research led by Trust staff, the policy requires the involvement of patients, carers, service users, and/or members of the public in the design, delivery, and dissemination of research.

To support this requirement, research fellows and early career researchers are offered training to help them work in line with best practice guidance, including the NIHR resources [Briefing notes for researchers - public involvement in NHS, health and social care research | NIHR](#), [Being inclusive in public involvement in health and care research | NIHR](#). This training is co-produced with the Research Engagement Network and the Sussex Research Training Hub.

10.2 Facilitating public and community involvement and engagement

UHSussex-led PCIE groups are supported and facilitated by the PCIE Team. The team facilitates meetings and enables participation through induction, ongoing communication, and support for access requirements, language needs, digital inclusion, and training needs.

The PCIE Team works to ensure that:

- Processes and systems are in place to securely store, manage, and process public contributors' personal information in line with the Trust's Information Governance Policy.
- Appropriate consent is obtained for the use of any images relating to PCIE activities.
- Public involvement opportunities are conducted in line with Trust values and the Terms of Reference of the relevant PCIE group. Feedback mechanisms and evaluation opportunities enable groups to reflect on and improve collaborative working practices.
- There is a clear purpose and shared understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and expectations associated with PCIE activities.
- Expectations regarding patient and public involvement are clearly agreed during induction.

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- There are clear routes for raising concerns. These are initially managed informally through the PCIE Team, with escalation available through the Trust's Responding to Concerns, Complaints and Resolution Policies.
 - We use trauma informed PCIE practice.
 - Appropriate support and safeguarding arrangements are in place for all research engagement and involvement activities, in line with the Trust's Adult Safeguarding Policy and Volunteer Policy, and with due regard to NIHR safeguarding guidance.
 - All public involvement activities are reimbursed and remunerated in line with NIHR guidance, Payment Guidance for Members of the Public Considering Involvement in Research. This approach to reward and recognition is applied consistently across the Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership and the Research Engagement Network.
 - All VCSE project work and capacity-building activities are appropriately remunerated.
 - Annual PCIE plans are appropriately costed to ensure sufficient resources are available to support meaningful involvement.
 - Public contributions to research are acknowledged, where agreed by contributors, in presentations, publications, and other outputs arising from the activity or project.
 - Any intellectual property generated through PCIE activities is managed in accordance with the Trust's Intellectual Property Policy.
 - Any conflicts of interest are identified, declared, and managed in line with the Trust's Managing Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Current procedures that support and protect public participation in PCIE activities will be formalised into a single, accessible guidance document, providing clear operational guidance for staff, researchers, and public contributors.

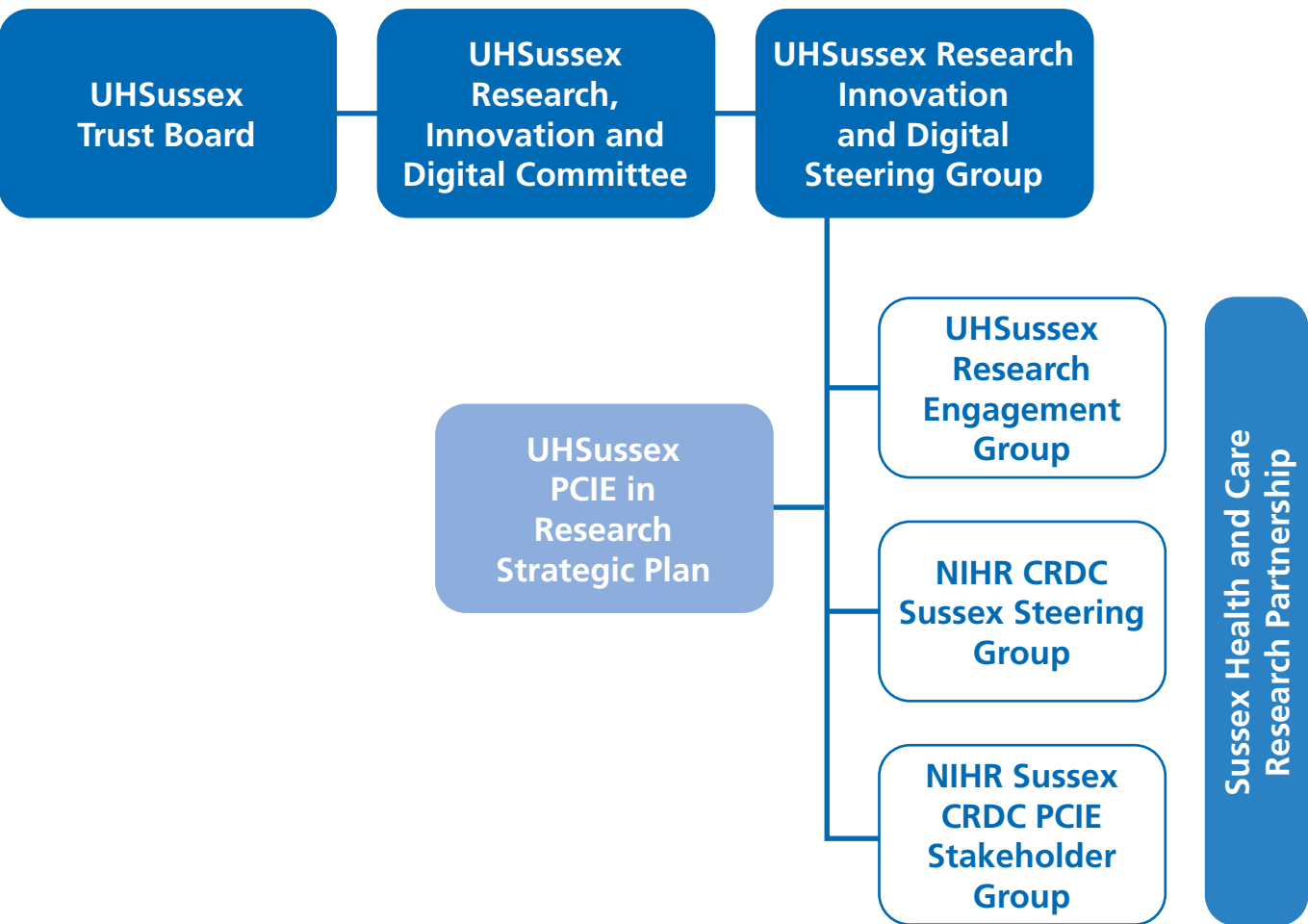
11. Governance and accountability

Patient and community involvement and engagement is a formal workstream in the UHSussex Research Delivery Plan 2025-30. The UHSussex Research, Innovation and Digital Steering Group oversee the delivery of this strategic plan, reporting to the Research Innovation and Digital Committee for Board Assurance.

The accountable Executive Director is the Chief Medical Officer; the accountable Directors are the Clinical and Operational Directors for Research and Innovation.

Progress against this strategic plan will be reviewed and reported annually in collaboration with our public members of the UHSussex Research Engagement Group and CRDC PCIE Stakeholder Group, with input from the Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership and Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network.

UHSussex host the NIHR CRDC: Sussex. The CRDC has a formal PCIE Plan that sits under this organisational strategic plan. This is overseen by the NIHR CRDC: Sussex PCIE Stakeholder Group reporting to the NIHR CRDC: Sussex Steering Group, both groups include public membership.

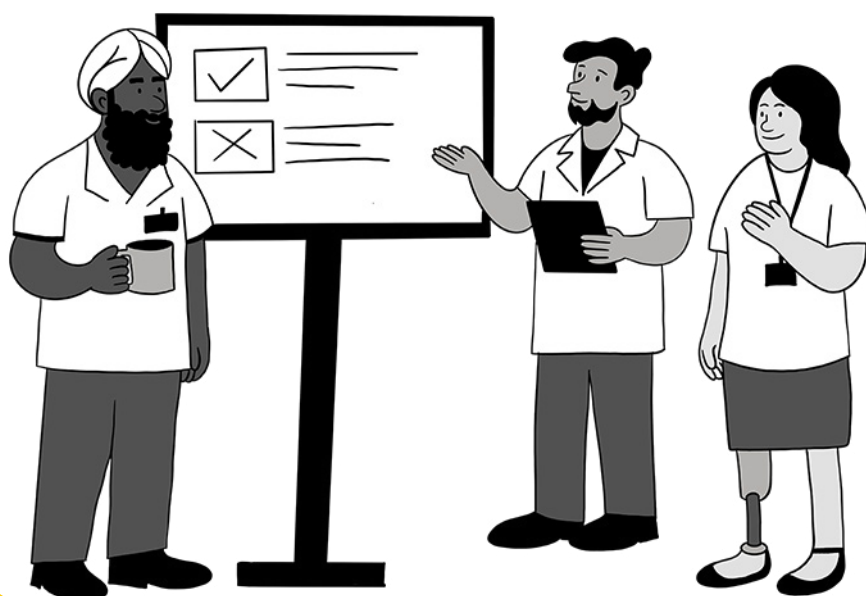


12. Monitoring the delivery of our plan

This plan outlines our ambition and focuses areas for our work for the next four years. It shows the practical actions we think would help us achieve this. Over time, our plans will continue to be developed and aligned with future regional PCIE strategies including the Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network, other NIHR regional infrastructure partners, and the Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership in order to ensure sustainable and coherent PCIE activities and community, VCSE partnerships. We will review progress annually with our Research Engagement Group and CRDC PCIE Stakeholder Group and report to the Trust's Research and Innovation Steering and Assurance Groups.

We will annually develop and update the detailed delivery plans for:

1. The UHSussex Research Engagement annual workplan – overseen by the Research Engagement Group (including Research Champions Group).
2. The NIHR CRDC Sussex PCIE Plan - overseen by the NIHR CRDC Sussex Stakeholder Group.



Glossary and abbreviations

Community Connector		In many communities, there exists a disconnect between individuals and the support, resources, and opportunities available to them that might help them improve their health and wellbeing. This is where Connectors come in, serving as vital conduits, and breaking down barriers. Community connectors are a movement of people making a difference by passing on information to friends, family, neighbours and strangers. The Sussex REN is exploring this approach to increasing community research engagement.
Community Researcher		Those facing the most health inequalities are least likely to be involved in research (NIHR Include Project 2020). This lack of inclusion operates on many levels, including identifying priorities for research, taking part in studies or leading research projects. Our Sussex-based REN project began in October 2023 with the aim of exploring how communities, community researchers and health and care researchers can work together to tackle inequalities and improve research inclusion. The project created a regional network of fifteen community researchers from marginalised backgrounds, including people from racially minoritised/global majority and migrant communities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQ+) communities; and disabled and neurodivergent individuals. The capacity of community researchers was built through development training and qualitative interviewing experience. The community researchers interviewed forty-two minoritised people from the above communities in geographical areas of deprivation, gaining in-depth knowledge of how to improve participation in health and care services and research. Community research involves working with people who have lived experience of the subject being studied. It brings unique insights and a deeper understanding, which in turn captures information that otherwise would not have been available. Guidance to work with Community Researchers For more information - Email: sussexren@bsms.ac.uk

NIHR	National Institute for Health and Care Research	The NIHR is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. Working in partnership with the NHS, universities, local government, other research funders, patients and the public – the NIHR funds, enables and delivers world-leading health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing and promotes economic growth.
NIHR ARC – KSS	NIHR Applied Research Collaboration – Kent, Surrey Sussex	NIHR Applied Research Collaborations (ARCs) deliver applied health and care research that addresses the needs of local populations and health and care systems - while also being scalable across the country. Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey & Sussex
NIHR CRDC - Sussex	NIHR Commercial Clinical Research Delivery Centre - Sussex	The NIHR CRDCs work with industry and other research delivery infrastructure to enhance the speed and efficiency of commercial clinical research delivery in the UK. About us - University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust NIHR CRDC Sussex has a PCIE Stakeholder Group made up of community representatives who help to plan and support inclusive community research engagement and participation activities for the CRDC.
NIHR RRDN - KSS	NIHR South East Regional Research Delivery Network (RRDN)	The RRDN is funded by the DHSC to enable the health and care system to attract, optimise and deliver research across England. This involves: • supporting the delivery of research which has been funded by the NIHR, research charities, other public funders and the life sciences industry. • increasing capacity and capability to deliver research for the future. • covering three different types of research: clinical, public health and social care • across four different settings: hospital, primary care, community and residential (or any of these in combination) About us NIHR

NIHR Be Part of Research		This NIHR service is designed to help people find and volunteer for research studies across the UK. Be Part of Research
NIHR My Research Experience		My Research Experience was previously called the Participant in Research Experience Survey (PRES). The new name uses clear, everyday language to help participants and the public better understand what the surveys are about. Hearing from participants is the best way to learn. Research participants provide valuable insights and help us to improve research for everyone. Organisations that deliver NIHR research are expected to run My Research Experience surveys on all studies. My Research Experience surveys NIHR RDN
REG	UHSussex Research Engagement Group	A group made up of patient, community and staff representatives that oversee and deliver research engagement activities for UHSussex.
SCRC	Sussex Cancer Research Centre	The Sussex Cancer Research Centre brings together experts from Brighton and Sussex Medical School, the University of Sussex, the University of Brighton, and NHS Trusts across Sussex, to pioneer interdisciplinary research that will improve cancer treatments and outcomes for people with cancer. The SCRC also has a PCIE group helping to shape cancer research. Sussex Cancer Research Centre
SHCRP	Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership	The Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership (SHCRP), established by Brighton and Sussex Medical School, brings together health and care research partners across Sussex. The partnership develops opportunities for shared research infrastructure, capacity building and collaboration to ensure each partner organisation realises their research ambitions. Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership - BSMS The SHCRP has a public and community involvement and engagement team – who are a small team of volunteers who have been providing PCIE advice and input to the Brighton and Sussex Health and Care Research Partnership through its formation and development.

Surrey and Sussex REN	Surrey and Sussex Research Engagement Network	The Surrey and Sussex REN is helping more people from different communities to take part in health and care research. By ensuring that research reflects the needs of a wider range of people, the REN supports better outcomes for communities across Surrey and Sussex. A key focus of our work is engaging with communities who are less likely to be reached by health and care research, to ensure that the benefits are inclusive and equitable. The Surrey and Sussex REN brings together local organisations including universities, hospitals, GPs, councils, voluntary sector and community groups. We are working together so that research is easier for communities to understand and join. Building long lasting, trusting relationships with our communities is a core part of the REN. REN - BSMS For more information Email: sussexren@bsms.ac.uk
Research Champions		The NIHR Research Delivery Network for Kent, Surrey and Sussex facilitates a public and patient Research Champions programme. Public and Patient Research Champions are volunteers with or without prior clinical research experience who spread the word about health and care research. They help researchers understand public experiences, promote study opportunities to diverse communities, and ensure that the patient voice is embedded across KSS health and care activity. Research Champions groups are run by local NHS Trusts in the region. UHSussex has a thriving Research Champions Group. Research champions - University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust For more information: Email: Uhsussex.researchengagement@nhs.net

Sussex Research Training Hub	Sussex Health and Care Research Training Hub	The Sussex Health and Care Research Training Hub is a dedicated service that strengthens research capability and nurtures a growing community of talented researchers. It supports a multi-professional group of doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, social care professionals and health and care researchers pursuing research opportunities. The Hub serves as a single point of contact for advice, best practices, and information on health and care academic research careers and recruitment to research fellowships. The hub provide specific support for current PhD students and pre/post-doc health and care professionals as well as trainees on the medical Integrated Academic Training programme. Sussex Health and Care Research Training Hub - BSMS
YPEG	Kent, Surrey, Sussex Young People's Advisory Group	A Young People's Advisory Group focused on how we can make research into the health of children and young people better. For young people aged from 8 to 17 years who want to make research better for children and young people Kent, Surrey & Sussex Generation R

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