

# PHD SCHOLAR INSIGHTS: A PPI IGNITE NETWORK KNOWLEDGE CAFE

During the National PPI Festival 2023, we as PhD students in the University of Galway gathered to discuss the benefits, challenges and support needs for PhD students hoping to include PPI in our research. Here's what we learned together.



## WHY INCLUDE PPI IN PHD RESEARCH?

### Better Research



It makes us better researchers and makes our research better. PPI adds to the rigour of our work, by making our research more open and relevant. We become better, more empathetic researchers in the process and learn new skills e.g. reflective research, communication.

### Equity & Empowerment



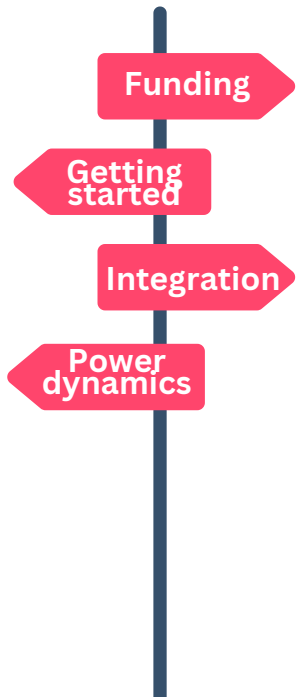
“Because it's the right thing to do” - PPI democratises research. We value PPI as it gives “power to the people” to shape research and empowers them to take back control. It is only right that taxpayers who fund our research have their say through PPI.

### Facilitates Connections



PPI facilitates connection with each other and our communities. It bridges the gap between the public and research and builds trust in an age of misinformation. We gain mutual respect for all opinions and experiences. It helps us “remember the why” to our research.

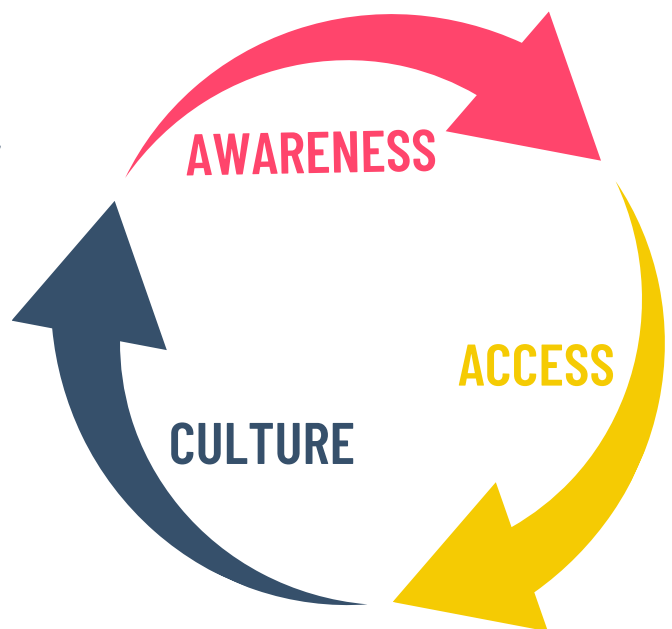
## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?



We have some concerns about including PPI voices in our research -- we are constrained by limitations like limited funding, supervisors' unfamiliarity with PPI methods, and institutional barriers. We also sometimes worry about navigating power dynamics on research teams, interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds or with different perspectives on their research topic, and the potential to inadvertently contribute to patients' stress or trauma. For some of us, PPI can feel like "going into the dark without a roadmap," and it can be hard to know how to start contacting PPI contributors, how to integrate them into research teams, and how to make sure we are giving them appropriate acknowledgement for their contributions.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

We need support to implement PPI into our PhDs. More awareness raised and stronger education given about PPI is needed for all members of University staff and students. Reaching out to us about opportunities like PPI modules, Shared Learning Groups and seed funding is essential in raising awareness. The earlier the better! Doing PPI will become easier once we are given ample time to prepare and have quick access to resources, education materials and templates. If we know about PPI and can easily find all the materials we need, a culture of support will grow in the future where more members of the University will be prepared to help PhD scholars pursue PPI.



“ PPI gives me the energy to keep going. ”



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHĒ  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



PPI IGNITE NETWORK



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