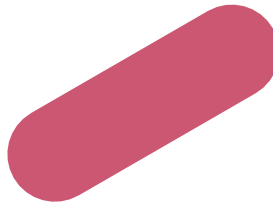# PPI IGNITE NETWORK

IMPACT CASE STUDY 6

From Learning to Leading: A co-developed and co-delivered module to embed PPI in the next generation of researchers

Who was involved?

- Twenty-four academic research and teaching staff
- Twelve individual PPI contributors and representatives from charity, voluntary and local organisations
- Six postgraduate students

Summary

Although it is accepted that training and education are essential for postgraduate students to enhance both their understanding of and skills to conduct meaningful PPI, few opportunities in formal PPI education exist. To address this gap, Network members co-developed and co-delivered a new, accredited 'Introduction to PPI in Health and Social Care Research' module for postgraduate students.

Key impact areas of this initiative include:

- Advancing PPI education in postgraduate training.
- Fostering a new generation of PPI researchers
- Strengthening collaborative networks
- Positioning the PPI Ignite Network at the forefront of developing PPI capacity amongst postgraduate students, nationally and internationally
- Enhancing research quality and societal impact.

Our work

Work Package 2 (WP2), led by University College Cork and University of Limerick, aims to embed PPI into postgraduate and undergraduate education. In November 2022, WP2 established a collaborative process to design the format, structure, and content of a module on PPI for postgraduate students. The module was co-developed by research and teaching staff, individual PPI contributors and charity and community representatives, and students through four subgroups.

In April 2024, the hybrid module was jointly piloted with 33 postgraduate students at University College Cork (UCC) and RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences (RCSI). Eight two-hour workshops (Figure 1) were delivered in-person and online by expert facilitators, featuring guest

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presentations and discussions led by PPI contributors and charity representatives.

Assessment included a reflective portfolio, presentations, and a final written assignment. Student feedback was largely positive with 96% (625/653) agreeing that workshop learning outcomes were met. Suggestions for improvement included refining content length, scheduling adjustments, and greater focus on lab-based and pre-clinical research.

Module content is available to all Lead Sites across the National PPI Ignite Network for wider implementation. UCC and RCSI will jointly deliver the module again in April 2025.

Our impact

Advancing PPI education in postgraduate training and fostering a new generation of PPI researchers

This initiative establishes PPI as a formal component of postgraduate education, addressing a critical gap in training of health and social care researchers. By equipping students with both theoretical understanding and practical skills, it fosters a new generation of researchers who prioritise meaningful public and patient involvement in health and social care research.

Strengthening collaborative networks

Bringing together 42 diverse partners to develop module content – including academics, charity representatives, and PPI contributors – this project has created a strong, interdisciplinary network. These collaborations have enhanced the quality of PPI education and set a precedent for future multi-stakeholder engagement in curriculum development.

Positioning the PPI Ignite Network at the forefront of developing PPI capacity amongst postgraduate students – nationally and internationally

IMPACT CASE STUDY

"Seeing postgraduate students engaged enthusiastically, develop meaningful PPI skills, and integrate PPI into their research has been truly inspiring. This module is shaping a new generation of researchers who are inspired to embed PPI in a wide range of research areas. Witnessing how graduates apply PPI principles to their work highlights the transformative impact of this initiative, helping to ensure that future research is relevant and responsive to societal needs."

Dr Emmy Racine, Programme Manager, PPI Ignite Network @ UCC

Information on the co-development and co-delivery process underpinning this module has been shared at several local, national, and international events. These platforms have not only highlighted the project's success but have also reinforced the PPI Ignite Network's leadership in advancing PPI capacity within postgraduate education.

Enhancing research quality and societal impact

By embedding PPI training into postgraduate education, this initiative enhances the capacity of early career researchers to conduct research that is more inclusive, relevant, and impactful. Students trained in PPI are better prepared to integrate diverse perspectives into their work, ultimately improving the real-world application and effectiveness of health and social care research.

Workshop 1 Introduction to PPI in Research	Workshop 2 History and Theory of PPI in Research
Workshop 3 Partnering with Organisations for PPI in Research	Workshop 4 Partnering with Individuals for PPI in Research
Workshop 5 How to do PPI in Research	Workshop 6 Building Relationships for PPI in Research
Workshop 7 Values, Moral, and Ethical Considerations	Workshop 8 Reporting and Evaluating PPI in Research

Module outline

PhD scholars engaged in a variety of participatory learning activities during the module

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IMPACT CASE STUDY

PPI IGNITE NETWORK

"This initiative plays a crucial role in strengthening collaborative networks and embedding PPI as a core ethos in research. It demonstrates, for our organization, our leadership in and commitment to PPI by advocating for best practice and actively contributing to its development. This module is a vital step toward a research culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and shared expertise.

Cíara O'Reilly, Research Project Officer, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland

"This module has been incredibly beneficial, as it has greatly enhanced my knowledge of the theoretical foundations of PPI and its historical development. Gaining insights from module facilitators with extensive experience in effective PPI, along with community members from local and voluntary organisations and members of the public has been crucial to my learning and has helped me draft a comprehensive PPI strategy. Since completing the module, I successfully set up a PPI panel who will be involved in many different stages throughout my PhD research.

Laura Jane McCarthy, PhD student