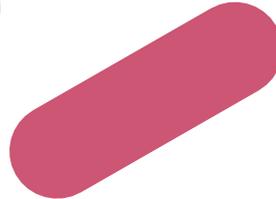




**PPI** IGNITE  
NETWORK

# IMPACT CASE STUDY



## National PPI Festival: making waves globally

### Who was involved?

- Seven lead sites & the national office
- National & local partners
- PPI contributors
- PhD students and researchers
- Charities, public agencies and research organisations

### Summary

The National PPI Festival is now an established annual event each October, showcasing the breadth and depth of PPI across Ireland. The Festival celebrates the progress, growth and innovation in PPI and provides a wealth of opportunities to develop new, and foster existing, relationships. The international reach of the Festival has grown year on year and there is evidence of increased global impact.

The National PPI Festival is inspiring the establishment of new and innovative PPI initiatives in other countries. Festival events are being organized globally, aligning with our Festival to be part of the celebration of PPI and to increase the knowledge-sharing and networking opportunities.

New international collaborations have developed through connections made

during the Festival. Individual PPI contributors internationally are supported to reach new audiences and develop their own skills and expertise.

### Our work

The National PPI Festival happens annually during the month of October.

The first Festival in 2022 was coordinated by the University of Galway. A Festival working group was established and defined the Festival aims, chose a theme for the first Festival and prioritised the creation of a visual identity for the Festival, linked to the Network logo. Templates for promotional items, for example, fliers and social media posts were designed and made available to all event organisers. Festival events were published on the Network's Calendar of Events, sharing information and registration details for all events.

We created [a Festival section](#) on the PPI Ignite Network's online hub, and resources created during the Festival were published there. A Festival brochure, capturing the impact of the Festival, was published later in 2022. The groundwork done for our first Festival provided a very solid foundation on which the Festival has developed and expanded year on year.



*“A former colleague of mine presented at the National PPI Festival this year [2025] and sung its praises. I am seeking funding as part of a grant application, for a trip to Ireland, for myself and a co-production team. If funded, our research will investigate equity and accountability in co-produced mental health research. I am excited to experience the Festival first-hand and I hope that the visit will inspire me in my work, create new connections and perhaps create opportunities for me to offer support to PPI members and living experience researchers newer to the work.”*

**Dr Lauren Walker, Canolfan ar Gyfer Iechyd Medwl a Chymdeithas Ysgol Gwyddorau Iechyd, Prifysgol Bangor  
Centre for Mental Health and Society, School of Health Sciences, Bangor University, Wales**

In each of 2023, 2024 and 2025, the Festival was coordinated by a different Network University (DCU, UCC, RCSI), underpinned by a new theme each year. Based on feedback from attendees at Festival events and other stakeholders, new initiatives were introduced. For example, we developed guidelines for Festival organisers, a standard Festival event evaluation form to gather feedback data centrally. New event organisers came on board each year, events focused on different topics and were targeted at new and often niche audiences. Several Network Universities organized funding calls, providing funds to support the organisation of Festival events.

The reach and impact of the Festival in Ireland is very evident, the Festival is now a key date in the annual diary of all

interested in PPI. And we have seen an expansion in the international reach and impact of the Festival. The concept of a grassroots national PPI Festival, which welcomed and encouraged all event organisers, with a flexible approach to event branding, captured the imagination of people interested in PPI across the globe. The number of attendees from outside Ireland increased annually, joining online events initially, then travelling to attend in-person Festival events.

## Our impact

### **Inspiring new and innovative PPI initiatives globally**

International visitors to the National PPI Festival have particularly valued the Festival’s open knowledge exchange and the networking opportunities. For example, drawing on a previous visit to Ireland and discussions with Network members, the Danish Diabetes and Endocrine Association (DDEA), the leading funder of diabetes research in Denmark, established a User Panel. In its first year, User Panel members made a 3-day visit to Ireland to attend National PPI Festival events.

Members of the DDEA User Panel were invited speakers at *Learning across borders*, an event co-hosted by the Network’s national office and RCSI, which explored PPI knowledge exchange across international borders and the strengthening of international PPI. During their visit, the DDEA group also held discussions with Network members on PPI training for PhD scholars. The DDEA subsequently organised an innovative, 2-day training course on PPI for PhD scholars in Denmark. PPI Ignite Network staff delivered some of the course workshops.

During Festival 2025, one workshop on PPI in trials methodology research drew attendees from Canada, France and Turkey, as well as the UK and Ireland and is adding to the international knowledge base on trial methodology research. This workshop was part of a collaborative initiative involving national partner, the [HRB TMRN](#) and the



UK-based the [MRC NIHR Trials Methodology Partnership](#).

## Festival events organized globally

More recently, some Festival events have been organized by teams outside Ireland. For example, in 2024, researchers from [Sao Paulo State University-UNESP](#), Brazil, organized the first PPI training event in their region as part of the (Irish) National PPI Festival, with contributions from Ireland, translated to Portuguese. A paper about this Festival event was published in the [Escola Anna Nery Journal of Nursing](#) on SciELO, an international database of scientific publications from 16 developing countries.

In 2025, the team organized two Festival events in their university, one for researchers and one for the public. Three team members also attended the Festival in-person, increasing their PPI knowledge and networking to expand collaborations with Irish researchers. The researchers produced a podcast entitled [National PPI Festival 2025 and Health Literacy](#), in Portuguese, to disseminate their experience locally and were awarded funding for further PPI supported research.



PPI Ignite Network capacity-building materials translated to Portuguese, used in a PPI workshop with adolescents in Brazil

## Broadening the reach of PPI contributors and lived experience researchers

Individual PPI contributors and people with lived experience from outside Ireland attend National PPI Festival events, initially online and more recently, in person. The National PPI Festival has provided opportunities for some individuals to organize and lead events and others have

had significant impact as invited speakers. For example, in 2024, Charlene Young, an individual PPI contributor from the UK secured funding through the University of Galway Festival funding call to organize and lead an in-person work shop on [engaging diverse communities in PPI](#).

Jessica Catchpole, a lived experience researcher reached new audiences as an invited speaker at the Festival 2025 launch event, where she reflected on being [a lived experience peer reviewer](#) for an international journal. The two hosts of the **Not Just Patients** podcast are from the UK and India, both live with rare diseases, and they [recorded a live podcast during the Festival 2025 launch event](#), reaching new audiences, with their ~1500 followers globally.

Thus, the National PPI Festival is broadening the reach of international PPI contributors, facilitating knowledge exchange between them and the PPI community in Ireland and sowing seeds for future collaborations. By the end of 2025, the Network had received several email enquiries for Festival 2026, as the international PPI community interested in experiencing our Festival firsthand were making plans for 2026 and in some cases, submitting funding applications to support their travel to Ireland.

## New international collaborations established creating global impact

Many new international collaborations have emerged from contacts made during the National PPI Festival. For example, a leading PPI-focused researcher from Canada and the Danish DDEA PPI team, both of whom had presented at the *Learning Across Borders* Festival 2024 event, collaborated to deliver PPI training in Denmark.

In 2022, the CURAM Research Ireland Medical Device Centre organized a Festival workshop, co-delivered with PPI Ignite Network staff, to introduce PPI to a cohort of new PhD scholars. The scholars were from the lifETIME CDT, a collaboration between three Universities in the UK and CURAM. The UK Universities subsequently invited Network staff to deliver PPI training events to several PhD cohorts, impacting PPI approaches across their research.



*“Participation in the 2024 (remote) and 2025 (in-person) PPI Festivals was essential for advancing PPI research. Furthermore, we shared this experience with the UNESP community (professors, undergraduate and postgraduate students, patients, and the public). Additionally, we disseminated this knowledge through REBRALS and SOBECC [organisations of Brazilian HPCs].*

*Finally, the research received two important grants to implement PPI in Nursing Research through agreements with CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel) and the Federal Nursing Council (COFEN). One grant will support research in São Paulo (Southeast Brazil) and Tocantins State (North Brazil), which includes the Legal Amazon region. The other grant was awarded by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP).”*

**Prof Mariele Gobo De Oliveira, Faculdade de Medicina de Botucatu, Sao Paulo State University, Brazil**

