



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scaghástála
National Screening Service



Patient and Public Partnership

National Screening Service

Patient and Public Partnership Chairperson Guide

2023



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Introduction

What is Patient and Public Partnership in the National Screening Service?

Patient and Public Partnership (PPP) is the name given to how we work with volunteer Patient and Public Representatives in the NSS. Working with patients is a core part of how we work and is everyone's responsibility. The different levels of patient involvement are identified in Appendix 1. We encourage all NSS staff to fully embrace working with our PPP Representatives as equal partners. This means sharing decision-making, being open, listening, and embracing perspectives that may be different from your own.

To hear more about what we do in PPP in the NSS and how it has transformed our operations listen here to a recent [Podcast](#). To find out more, you can also read our [PPP Strategy](#) and our [PPP Progress Report](#).

Figure 1: PPP Principles



Figure 2: NSS values and behaviours



To learn more about our National Screening Service Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and our values and behaviours of Care, Compassion, Trust and Learning click [here](#).

Who is the PPP Chairperson Guide for?

This guide has been developed to assist NSS Chairs of projects and committees that include PPP Representatives. It focuses on the aspects of chairing that PPP Representatives and NSS Staff have identified as being important. It does not aim to provide general advice on good chairing. However, many of these suggestions are likely to benefit all project members – whatever their background – and will help groups to work together more effectively.

Why is the Chairperson role important when working with PPP Representatives?

The role of Chairperson is essential to ensuring PPP Representatives are included as equal project members and are supported to provide meaningful contributions and fulfil their role. They are also essential in modelling how we work with PPP Representatives to other project members.

Figure 3: Role of Chairperson in supporting PPP Representatives in NSS work



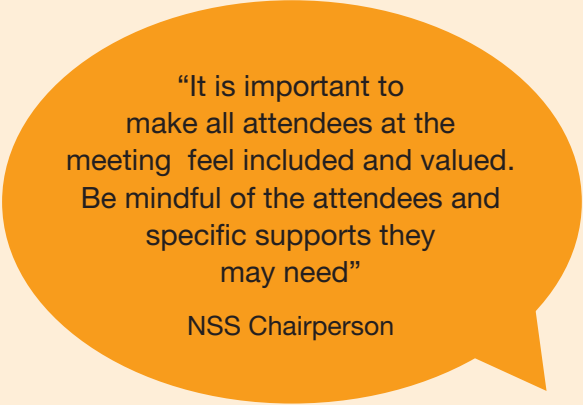
There are several steps the chairperson must take to ensure group dynamics support meaningful partnership and PPP Representatives are fully supported in playing an equal role. It is important their views are listened to and respected.

The main elements highlighted in Figure 3 will be discussed in more detail throughout the document along with some top tips on how to put these into action in meetings.

How we developed this Chairperson guide


We spoke with NSS colleagues and PPP Representatives to find out what previously worked well on NSS committees and projects and have compiled a list of tips and advice to support you when working with our PPP Representatives. We recognise it isn't always plain sailing and so we have also compiled a list of challenges (Appendix 2) and advice on how to address them.

Here are some examples of what NSS staff and PPP Representatives have said:



“It is important to make all attendees at the meeting feel included and valued. Be mindful of the attendees and specific supports they may need”

NSS Chairperson



“(Chairperson) was great - she would always say ‘I want to hear from the PPP Reps, what do you think about that’ - she really listened to us and took our opinions on board. No one ever cut me off and I was always given the opportunity to speak”

PPP Representative

PPP Advice, Tips and Checklists

PPP Representatives told us that an effective Chairperson is essential to the success of meaningful PPP involvement. These are some of the words they used to describe a good Chair:

“Inclusive”

“Open”

“Listens”

“Skilled”

“Manages group dynamics”

“Available”

“Communicates clearly”

“Checks-in regularly”

“Able to influence”

Top Tip: Avoid Tokenism!



Tokenism can occur at any degree of engagement and is defined as “the difference between...the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome”

Arnstein, 1960 in HSE Better Together Patient Engagement Roadmap

General Principles for engaging with PPP Representatives

- Make sure you get to know your PPP Representatives.
- Make PPP Representatives feel welcomed, included, valued and respected.
- Make clear to all committee / project members that PPP Representatives’ perspectives are valued.
- Treat PPP Representatives as equals – equivalent to other members of your group.
- Ensure PPP Representatives are given the practical supports they need to meaningfully contribute.
- Help other group members to see the benefits of PPP.

Build a Culture of Partnership

The Chairperson should model the behaviour they want to see in meetings. This means being inclusive, communicating clearly, listening and responding.

Other top tips for Building a Culture of Partnership

- Be clear that partnership working is everybody's business.
- Build relationships based on trust.
- Be alert to your own personal biases.
- Be open to being questioned.
- Understand peoples interests and needs.
- Provide clarity on roles and responsibilities.
- Be honest and realistic about what is in scope and out of scope from the outset.
- Be impartial.
- Avoid tokenism – ensure PPP Representatives have influence and are involved as early as possible.
- Understand the level of engagement required and the limits of the type of engagement being used.
- Familiarise yourself with HSE values and [NSS Strategy](#) behaviours.

Welcoming PPP Representatives joining a committee or project

The introduction of new PPP Representatives to the committee / project is an important first step. This will help you to introduce the work, scope and bring role clarity. It will also help to build a relationship between you and the PPP Representative.



Before the first meeting every PPP Representative joining should have an induction with the Chairperson and other key people working on the committee/ project. This gives the opportunity to discuss roles, responsibilities and expectations.

Checklist for induction

- Be clear on the purpose of the committee / project and PPP role (Q-pulse: NSS/PUB/COM-19)
- Provide information on the membership of the committee / project i.e., project Terms of Reference, who is on the committee / project and what their role is.
- Be clear on time commitment and how meetings will be run e.g., in-person / online.
- If there are dependencies, ensure PPP Representatives are informed about them.
- Introduce PPP Representatives to other key people on the committee / project.
- Provide committee / project documentation.
- Give opportunity to ask questions.

Preparing for meetings

Chairs and PPP Representatives told us how important preparation is to facilitating good working relationships and to ensuring everyone comes with an understanding of what is being asked. We have summarised the checklists and top tips you have given us to help to prepare in advance of meetings with PPP Representatives.



It is a good idea to offer a pre-meeting briefing (e.g. via phone or online meeting) with PPP Representatives before beginning a committee / project. It gives PPP Representatives a chance to ask any questions about the committee / project and the upcoming meeting.

If someone is willing to give 2.5 hours of their time per month supporting a project, then it's important that they have good insight into the project and their roles and expectations as a PPP Representative.

NSS Chairperson

Planning is key to all meetings. It is essential that the meeting has a clear purpose and outcome meeting goals are identified in advance of the meeting... All supporting meeting documents should be shared with attendees well in advance - ideally one week in advance.

NSS Chairperson

Meeting Preparation Checklist

Before the first meeting

- Have you asked if PPP Representatives need information in a specific format or printed and posted to them?
- Have you shared the Terms of Reference?
- Have you shared the agendas and papers in advance? (1 week before the meeting is recommended)
- Is there a clear spot on the agenda for any PPP items? Ensure it does not seem these are being “tacked on”.
- Is the PPP Representative clear on the meeting purpose?
- Have you scheduled a pre-meet with the PPP Representatives, as required? (10-15 mins before a meeting can help talk through the topics to be discussed and aims of the meeting)
- Have you asked if there are any areas / items that are of interest to PPP Representatives?
- Have you discussed the PPP Representatives role on the group? (PPP Representatives give a lay person view and do not require qualifications and experience in a specific area)
- Are you familiar with potential barriers to PPP and how to overcome these? (Please refer to appendix 2)
- Have you assigned a committee / project point of contact?
- Have you checked committee / project materials for jargon?
- If you are using on-line meeting platforms or tools, check if PPP Representatives has experience using these or if they require additional support.
- Have you asked them why they are interested in this topic? Give PPP Representatives the opportunity to share any personal experiences that they may be bringing and be mindful of this throughout engaging with them.

At first meeting

In addition to general points already identified above, the following should also be considered:

- Allow time for introductions and ensuring everyone knows their/ each other’s roles.
- Welcome PPP Representatives and explain their role and importance to other committee / project members.
- Have you explained the purpose of the meeting, without assuming prior knowledge?

After first meeting

- Check in with the PPP representative to discuss how the first meeting went – discuss any additional supports to be put in place.
- Ensure PPP Representatives know they can contact their committee / project ‘point of contact’ if they have any additional questions/queries in relation to the meeting.
- Provide feedback to PPP Representatives as to where their input has been particularly valuable and what has changed a result.

Meetings

Ensuring PPP Representatives are included in decision-making and are equal members of the committee is important. Building group cohesion and understanding is a fundamental aspect of equality, so giving time to relationship building early is important and providing clear communication free of jargon. There may be conflict on occasions, but members should respect differences of opinion. When required the Chairperson should be able to skilfully move conversations on and keep discussions within the boundaries of the meeting in a respectful way.



Ensure PPP Representatives know how to use the 'raise hand' function on virtual meetings, and encourage them to type thoughts/ideas/options/questions into the chat box.

"It was difficult getting used to the language. There were lots of abbreviations that I didn't understand. The ERG report had an abbreviations section that I found very helpful but new PPP reps could be intimidated by the language."

PPP Representative

"(Chairperson) was very good. He always tried to include me in things, always asked if I had any questions or anything to include in discussions - I felt like my voice was heard."

PPP Representative

"Take anything not relevant to the meeting offline. If a PPP Rep has question/query that is not listed on the agenda, acknowledge the query and agree to follow up with them separately after the meeting."

NSS Chairperson

"Openings are important, welcome members (especially new ones), setting the scene, introductions, refer to previous minutes, explain the purpose."

NSS Chairperson

"It is vital the PPP Reps have a trusted link person with whom they can share their concerns, issues and ideas of better ways of working. This creates a safe and trusted way of working, and it has proved to be successful in the IC Project."

NSS Chairperson

Meetings

At the beginning

- Be aware of any items of the agenda that might be of interest to PPP Representatives.
- Review meeting items and identify if there are any areas that may be sensitive or contentious and have a plan for how to handle these. Many people have personal and sometimes difficult experiences.
- Allow time for introductions and ensuring everyone knows their/ each other's roles.
- Welcome PPP Representatives and explain their role and importance to other project members.
- Have you explained the purpose of the meeting, without assuming prior knowledge? Have you given permission for people to ask questions if needed?
- Have you reminded everyone to limit use of jargon and abbreviations or explain terms if technical terms can't be avoided?
- Have you agreed some ground rules /ways of working as a group to create a "safe space" e.g., respect differences of opinion.
- Have you highlighted you intend to adhere to good meeting management e.g., have an appointed note taker, the process for meeting/decision-making, follow the agenda, will work strictly to time.

During the meeting

Managing discussions

- Ensure decision-making is transparent and PPP Representatives are included in the process.
- Summarise discussions in plain English.
- Have regular check-ins to see if everything has been understood.
- Ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak.

Managing people

- Be mindful of group cohesions / cliques. Give thought to outsiders.
- Be impartial. Allow other views to be heard before sharing your own.
- Consider power issues in the group. Don't allow more powerful voices to dominate.
- Try not to give PPP Representatives preferential treatment – feel free to stop discussions if they are veering off topic by:
 - 1) Thanking for insights but asking that discussions are confined to areas being discussed
 - 2) Let people know when something is out of scope
 - 3) Tactfully but firmly move discussions on "Thank you for your contribution, you have raised some really interesting points. I am going to stop you there for a moment so other people can contribute"

At the end of the meeting

- Summarise the meeting and main action points in plain English.



Following the meeting

It is useful for the chairperson or an identified project 'point of contact' to offer PPP Representatives a post meeting de-briefing session, as required.

Providing an opportunity to check in with PPP Representatives and other group members after a meeting can help keep things progressing smoothly and allow an early opportunity to address any issues if needed.

After the meeting

- Make sure important contributions made by PPP Representatives are noted and correctly attributed in the minutes.
- Ensure minutes are circulated promptly. Recommended to circulate within two weeks after meeting, or as agreed.
- Consider asking for feedback on your chairing - check it was effective and that the decisions were clear and acceptable to everyone.
- Try to be available to answer any queries and provide open lines of communication for people to provide additional thoughts by email or telephone.
- Ensure PPP Representatives know they can contact their project 'point of contact' if they have any additional questions/queries in relation to the meeting.
- Provide feedback to PPP Representatives as to where their input has been particularly valuable and what has changed a result.

Conclusion

We hope you find this document helpful when working in partnership with PPP Representatives on your NSS projects and committees.

This document will be reviewed and updated regularly, and if you have any further insights or tips that you'd like to share with us, please contact ppplead@screeningservice.ie.

Useful tools, resources and further reading

Useful tools

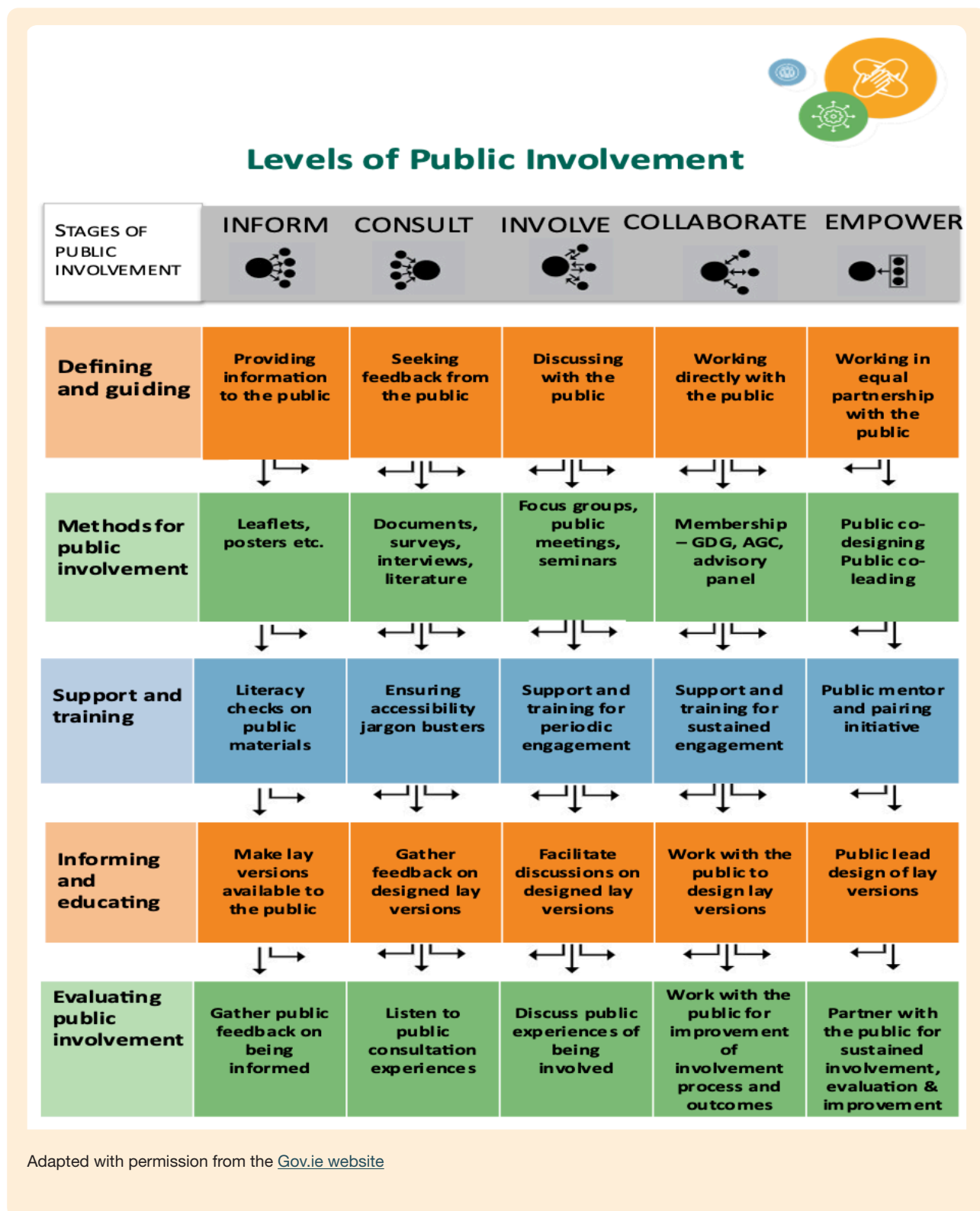
Topic	Tool	Link
Communication Tips & Tools	Communication Plan	Click Here
	Checklist for effective communication	Click Here
	HSE Guidelines for Communicating Clearly using Plain English	Click Here
Engagement	Pathways to Patient Engagement Training	Click Here
	Sharing Expectations Questionnaire	Click Here
	Patient Engagement Role Requirements / Invitation Information Checklist	Click Here
Shared decision-making	Shared decision-making tools from National HC Communication Programme	Click Here
	Shared decision-making skills card for staff	Click Here

Resources and further reading

- NSS, 2019. Patient and Public Partnership Strategy 2019-2023. [Click Here](#)
- NSS, 2019. Patient and Public Partnership Strategy 2019-2023 Progress Report. [Click Here](#)
- Better Together: The Health Services Patient Engagement Roadmap. [Click Here](#)
- NSS Strategy: Choose Screening. Together we can make a difference. [Click Here](#)
- Patient and public involvement (PPI) in research groups 2010 Guidance for Chairs. [Click Here](#)
- Paper to Inform National Social Inclusion Office Involvement in Service User Consultation and the Development of Service User Frameworks, 2019. [Click Here](#)
- Link to PPP Video Testimonials on YouTube
 - 1) <https://youtu.be/sUe9A3axGwY>
 - 2) <https://youtu.be/Pd0dIL6y8i8>
 - 3) <https://youtu.be/qtdha-dceUo>
- HSELand - chairperson training

Appendices

Appendix 1: Levels of Involvement



Appendix 2: Common barriers to Patient Engagement

Barriers to Patient Engagement	How to overcome the barriers
Lack of trust	Provide an open and safe environment between PPP Representative and chairperson from the beginning. Encourage them regularly to use their voice and expertise to inform the project.
Timing of engagement/ tokenism	Seek regular input from PPP Representatives and give due consideration to their valuable feedback. Incorporate their feedback into processes / resources where appropriate. Provide feedback why some suggestions will not be incorporated. Acknowledge their input regularly.
Power imbalance	Minimum of 2 PPP Representatives per group. Ensure chairperson provides opportunity for PPP Representatives to have their voice heard.
Fear e.g. lack of understanding of role or knowledge sharing	At project initiation – ensure thorough knowledge sharing of the background and purpose of the project with PPP Representatives. Ensure they are well informed before they meet other project members. Provide ongoing engagement with PPP Representatives to ensure they have enough information to contribute in a meaningful manner throughout the project lifecycle.
The accessibility and the physical environment	Ask PPP Representatives if they have any specific requirements
Using clinical language, acronyms, abbreviations	Avoid jargon, provide Jargon Busters
Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs and motivations of PPP Representatives and/or NSS Staff	At the kick-off meeting, encourage all project members to provide insight into why they are part of this project group. Provide sufficient information in advance of all meetings. Ensure an agenda is available and encourage communication between chairperson / PPP Representatives to allow items of uncertainty to be discussed in advance of the meeting. Provide additional information if required.
Inadequate training/supports for PPP Representatives and/or NSS Staff	Provide specific training and education, as required.

More information on barriers can be found in:

- Ocloo J, Garfield S, Franklin BD, Dawson S. Exploring the theory, barriers and enablers for patient and public involvement across health, social care and patient safety: a systematic review of reviews. Health Res Policy Syst. 2021 Jan 20;19(1):8. doi: 10.1186/s12961-020-00644-3. PMID: 33472647; PMCID: PMC7816359.
- HSE. Better Together Patient Engagement Roadmap. 2022; Pg 17 <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/person-family-engagement/resourcesqid/hse-better-together-patient-engagement-roadmap-book.pdf>



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