



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Public Advisor with the **Applied Research Collaboration** **Kent, Surrey and Sussex**

What is a Public Advisor?

A Public Advisor is someone who helps make sure that research is:

- Focused on things that matter to people, by improving relevance and quality.
- Inclusive and fair, widening diversity to reflect the needs of communities.
- Informed by peoples lived experience.

They bring a **public or community viewpoint** to discussions and decisions, supporting good governance and ethical practice and help us stay accountable to the public.

Who can apply?

You can apply if you:

- Are **18 or over**.
- Live in **Kent, Surrey or Sussex**. (Areas covered by ARC KSS in this region exclude Greater London and the London Boroughs)
- Have lived experience, caring experience, community experience, or interest in health and social care.

You **do not** need research experience.

Do I need to be a professional or academic?

No. We are looking for people with:

- Lived experience of health & care services, i.e. knowledge and understanding gained from your own life and personal experiences
- Community knowledge
- Different perspectives

Your experience of health, care, or communities is what matters.

How does a Public Advisor role differ to a Public Contributor role?

Public Advisors are members of the public who take on an ongoing role within ARC KSS, working closely with our research theme teams and help with the wider organisational and governance work, i.e. how decisions are made and how things are run within the organisation. Public Advisors make sure that lived experience and public voices are included in decisions, helping guide our priorities and shape the work we do.

Public Contributors are members of the public who get involved in individual projects. They use their lived experience to help shape projects, making sure inclusion and accessibility are considered from the start. Their input helps ensure projects meet the needs of the people they are designed for.

If you are interested in supporting the work of ARC KSS as a Public Contributor on a project, you can find more information about how to sign up on our webpages. [Getting Involved](#).

What kind of work will I be asked to do as a Public Advisor?

This may include:

- Going to meetings (online or in person).
- Reading papers before meetings.
- Sharing your views and experience.
- Helping shape research priorities.
- Giving feedback on how inclusive and accessible work is.

You will not be expected to do everything on your own.

What is the Public Involvement Network (PIN)?

Part of the Public Advisor role is to be a member of the PIN. This group meets 4 times a year (3 online and 1 face to face) to:

- Share updates.
- Learn from and support each other.
- Raise issues or ideas.
- Strengthen public involvement across ARC KSS.

How much time does the role take?

- As a minimum, Theme and Governance groups will meet 3 times per year for formal steering group meetings - mostly online with 1 face to face meeting per year.

- The PIN group will meet 4 times per year.
- Online meetings last 1 - 2 hours.
- Some reading or preparation time will be required before meetings.

If you are asked to join in with other groups or meetings, and you have time, then of course you can.

Generally, public advisors are expected to attend a minimum of 2-3 theme and governance groups per year and 3 PIN groups per year.

How long is the role for?

The role is offered for a period of 3 year, with the option to continue for the full term of this programme (5 years) if it is still working well for you.

You can step down at any time if your circumstances change.

Will meetings be online or in person?

We cover a large geographical area (Kent, Surrey & Sussex), so much of our work is by email and online meetings, usually Microsoft Teams or sometimes via Zoom. If you have difficulty with internet access or the use of technology, we will endeavor to support you.

On occasions there are face to face events. If you can attend, your travel expenses will be funded.

Is this a paid role?

This is not an employment role, however, there is payment offered for your time involved.

You will be paid for:

- Attending meetings.
- Preparing for meetings.
- Reviewing documents.
- Other agreed work.

Travel and other expenses can also be claimed. Rates of payment will be agreed with you prior to an activity with most activities being paid in line with [NIHR public payment rates](#).

Will being paid affect my benefits?

Payments **may affect benefits**.

NIHR provides free, confidential advice about benefits and payments

We can help you access this support before you decide.

Will I get training or support?

Yes. You will receive:

- A full induction to the ARC and to your Theme team or governance group.
- Support from the PCIE team - email or phone.
- A buddy to help you settle in.
- Training if you need it.
- Regular check-ins.
- Regular ARC KSS newsletters to keep you up to date.

You will not be expected to already know everything.

What if I have access needs or need extra support?

We want the role to work for you and make sure no one is excluded from being involved. We will work with you to find a way to overcome any barriers you may face. Things we can offer include:

- Information in different formats.
- Help with forms.
- Extra time.
- Support in meetings.
- Adjustments for online or in-person meetings.

You can tell us what you need at any time.

Can I apply for more than one role?

Yes. Please indicate your interest in as many public advisor roles as you would like to be considered for. However, to allow for a wide and diverse range of perspective, each member is limited to a maximum of two public advisor roles.

Public Contributor roles can be held in addition to the two public advisor roles.

How long does the role last?

The role is for:

- A minimum of **3 years**.
- Up to **5 years**, if both you and ARC KSS agree.

You can step down at any time if your circumstances change.

What if I don't understand something?

That's okay. There is no such thing as a silly question. You can:

- Ask questions.
- Request clearer explanations.
- Ask for jargon to be explained in plain English.

Research should be understandable to everyone.

How do I apply?

You need to:

- [Complete the application form](#)
- Tell us which role(s) you are interested in.
- Return the form by email or post.

Support is available to help you apply.

Closing date: **Sunday 21 June 2026**

Who can I contact if I want to talk first or need help?

We are offering informal, voluntary **online drop-in sessions** for anyone who is thinking about applying for a Public Advisor role with ARC KSS and would like to find out a bit more first. There is no expectation to join a session, and attending will **not** affect the outcome of any application.

Monday 8 June 2026 12.30pm - 1.30pm

Tuesday 16 June 2026 6pm-7pm

To sign up for one of these online events [click here](#)

You can contact the **PCIE Team**: Pippa Shaw or Lou Lacey.

✉ spft.publicinvolvementarckss@nhs.net

☎ 0300 304 1025

You can email, phone, or ask for a one-to-one chat online.