












Payment, Recognition and Reward Policy

PIRU Public Contributors

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Introduction

This document provides information on payment, recognition and rewards for public contributors' involvement with the NIHR Policy Research Unit in Policy Innovation and Evaluation (PIRU) for the period January 2024 – December 2028.

Involvement can include:

- preparing for and participating in meetings;
- reading, reviewing and contributing to documents;
- attending conferences, events and training sessions;
- developing and co-producing outputs, information sheets and other research materials;
- conducting research activities or interpreting research findings.

The policy has been informed by our [PPIE Strategy](#) and external guidance, [including that from our funder](#), the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).

NIHR have also produced [payment guidance for members of the public considering involvement in research](#) (due to be reviewed again in Spring 2026).

The policy will be reviewed annually and updated where necessary.

We are committed to making the contribution payment process as straightforward as possible for our public contributors and are working with our central services teams at the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) to achieve this.

If you have any feedback on this policy, please send this to PIRU-PPIE@lshtm.ac.uk.

Submit Your Details

When you agree to become a public contributor for PIRU, you will be asked to complete a secure online form. The form will ask for your contact and payment details, some information on your experiences of health and social care, and your preferences and accessibility requirements so that we can provide you with any support that you need to contribute. If you cannot complete this form yourself, a member of our team would be happy to have a call with you (by telephone, Zoom or Teams) to complete it together.

This only needs to be done once, unless any of your details change. Your details will be stored securely, in line with our [Privacy Notice](#).

After you have submitted your details, you will not be required to take any action to request your contribution payments; this will be handled by the PIRU team. The only time we may contact you is to confirm the amount of time spent reviewing documents so that we are accurately reimbursing you for your time.

If you have expenses, you **will** be required to contact us (see [Expenses](#) section).

Payment Rate

As a 'thank you' for your vital contributions to our research, PIRU will pay public contributors at a rate of £27.50 per hour* for attendance at training sessions and researcher talks or £35 per hour* for research involvement (e.g. for attendance at panel or project meetings, watching meetings back if they were recorded, review of documents, etc.). If you would like confirmation of the rate of pay for an activity beforehand, please send us an email.

Please note that as most of our meetings are held online, the rates above are *inclusive* of a contribution towards 'home working' costs (i.e. phone/internet, printing).

We will also reimburse contributors for reasonable and eligible expenses (see [Expenses](#) section).

*Children and young people (up to 16) may be paid at a different rate (to be discussed with the individual and the person who has parental responsibility for them).

Payment options

You have the option to be paid for your involvement by bank transfer or with an e-voucher. You can choose not to be paid at all, or for your payment to be donated to a charity instead.

Please be aware that any payments made to you for your contributions are treated as part of your overall personal income and may affect your tax requirements or welfare benefits. Please see the [Guidance on Tax, National Insurance and Benefits](#) section.

If this affects you, please let us know and we can discuss what works best for you, e.g. you may wish to donate part of your payment, spread payments out or be paid at a lower rate.

Payment Schedule

You should receive your payment within two weeks of the date of your involvement.

Whichever day of the week you attend a meeting, your payment will follow the same schedule:

- Payment requests are submitted weekly on a Friday.
- The LSHTM Finance Team approves payments on the following Wednesday.
- Payments should reach your account by Friday of that week.

Worked Example

- You attend a meeting on Wednesday 2nd July.
- The PIRU team will process your payment request between Friday 4th – Tuesday 8th July.
- The Finance Team will approve your payment on Wednesday 9th July.
- The payment should appear in your account by Friday 11th July.
- If the payment hasn't arrived by 5pm Monday 14th July, please contact us.

If Payment Is Delayed

If your payment has not shown in your account by 5pm on the Monday after it was due please contact PIRU-PM@lshtm.ac.uk with 'PPIE payment' in the subject line.

Expenses

We will reimburse costs required for an individual to participate in involvement activities, including attending in-person meetings.

Wherever possible, the PIRU administrative team will book travel/accommodation on your behalf. Please ask us if you would like any assistance.

Expenses that we will cover

- **Public transport:** we encourage the use of public transport wherever possible and will reimburse you for standard class travel when a receipt is provided.
- **Mileage:** where necessary (and pre-agreed with the PIRU team) at a rate of 45p per mile.
- **Car parking:** may be claimed where these are unavoidable, where using your own car is absolutely necessary and where a receipt is provided.
Parking and speeding fines do not qualify for reimbursement.
- **Taxis:** where the circumstances justify the cost. Please let your PIRU contact know in advance if you expect to require taxi journeys, and request a receipt from the driver.
- **Meals and refreshments:** For in-person meetings and events, PIRU will usually provide meals, snacks and refreshments. If you are purchasing this yourself, guidance rates are up to £8 for breakfast, £10 for lunch and £25 for dinner. Additional reasonable costs may be claimed with receipts. Alcoholic beverages will not be covered.
- **Childcare or carer costs:** If you require support in order to allow your involvement, please let us know so that we can discuss how best to facilitate this.

If there are other costs that you feel should be covered to allow your participation (such as an interpreter, other accessibility costs, car hire, etc.), please contact PIRU-PPIE@lshtm.ac.uk to discuss.

Claiming expenses

If you have any expenses to claim, please email your receipts to PIRU-PM@lshtm.ac.uk with 'PPIE expenses' in the subject line.

Guidance on Tax, National Insurance and Benefits

Payments and vouchers received for public involvement activities are considered income and could have implications for your tax and National Insurance contributions, or if you are in receipt of benefits. Being paid for your involvement is likely to impact you regardless of your employment status or eligibility for benefits. You are responsible for ensuring that you understand the implications of receiving payment and declare this where necessary.

If you are employed or self-employed, you are responsible for declaring any income to HMRC. The type of activities we pay public contributors for are those that [HRA](#) and [NIHR](#) guidance indicate do not constitute employment. Therefore, we do not deduct tax or National Insurance from your involvement payments.

If your annual taxable income appears to exceed your annual tax-free personal allowance, you should contact your local HM Revenue and Customs office for advice, and you may have to complete a self-assessment form.

The NIHR has also co-produced a [guidance document for public contributors with advice specifically on this topic](#).

If you are in receipt of state benefits, payment for your involvement may affect your benefits and you may need permission to undertake any paid activity. Benefit conditions vary widely, so we strongly recommend consulting [NIHR's payment guidance](#) and contacting one of the following organisations for advice before undertaking any activities:

- **Benefits Advice Service:** A free, confidential service to support members of the public whose welfare benefits may be affected by payment for involvement. For more information on how to access this service, please contact the NIHR Centre for Engagement and Dissemination ced@nihr.ac.uk or call **020 8843 7117**.
- **Citizens Advice:** You can find your local Citizens Advice either on the [Citizens Advice website](#) or by telephoning **0800 144 8848** (for England). Note that rules may be different in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. You can find links to your country's Citizens Advice service at the top of the Citizens Advice webpage.

- **Disability Rights UK:** Information for those with disabilities and in receipts of benefits can be found on the [Disability Rights UK website](#).
- **HM Revenue and Customs:** Information and contact details can be found on the [HMRC website](#).
- **Department for Work and Pensions:** Often refer to public involvement as 'service user involvement', and it is advisable to use this term when corresponding or discussing payment for public involvement with welfare benefits authorities. You can find contact details on the [DWP website](#).

You may also request a letter from us explaining the nature of your involvement to share with your benefits advisor.

Please note that benefits legislation changes regularly, and it is your responsibility to ensure you remain compliant with current rules.