

PPI Bursary scheme for service users and carers opens for applications to be spent before 31 March 2022.

As a service user and carer, getting involved in the process of changing and improving Health and Social care services can be daunting. It may be difficult to get access to the training and support necessary for personal development to allow engagement in the involvement process; or you may fear that your voice and opinions will not be valued. However, a range of training and resource materials are currently available to help service users, carers and members of the public understand further how they can contribute to PPI activities throughout Northern Ireland.

There is also Engage, a central educational resource, which provides access to e-learning, information on PPI and best practice case studies which demonstrate how impactful getting involved can really be. In addition, they provide a successful Partnership Leadership Programme, which will run for the second consecutive year this September. The programme aims specifically to develop collective leadership skills, behaviours and build collaborative relationships amongst professionals, patients/clients, carers and communities. The PHA, via Engage and the Patient Client Council (PCC), also actively advertises a wide variety of opportunities to enable service users, carers, HSC staff and members to engage in PPI in both a local and regional capacity. Examples of this include the [Make Change Together](#) initiative, which is a recruitment, training and support programme that allows service users, carers and members of the public to help improve and transform health and social care in Northern Ireland through formal consultation.

Service users and carers are also involved in many other initiatives in Health and Social Care including:

- Integrated Care Partnerships - who seek to design and coordinate the delivery of local HSC services
- The Regional PPI Forum, which provides strategic direction to embed PPI into the culture and practice of HSC.

- Regional transformation programmes of work including breast assessment screening services and stroke services.
- Transforming mental health services through Recovery Colleges in each local Health and Social Care Trusts.

Other involvement events or initiatives may include the opportunity to attend a training course or conference which will provide the chance to learn new skills, understand current trends and practice in PPI and to network with others active in the field. Attendance at these events can often come with a fee, in addition to travel and other additional costs.

To support service users and carers to become involved with current opportunities, the PHA is again running its Service User and Carer Bursary Scheme. The scheme aims to support service users and carers currently involved with HSC by providing individual grants up to the value of £750 (per individual per application) within the current financial year, with this years' available fund totalling £2500. These individual awards enable service users and carers to avail of opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in areas that will enhance Involvement and Co-production work with HSC.

The Bursary Scheme therefore provides individuals with access to funding to allow them to attend events, purchase materials or subscriptions to relevant materials, training and/or initiatives, empowering them to develop themselves and their work in PPI within the HSC. The scheme was initially created as a result of feedback from service users and carers and reinforces the findings of the *Health and Wellbeing 2026 - Delivering Together* report, published in 2016, which clearly outlined that working in partnership with service users and carers can be of crucial benefit to the improvement and transformation of health and social care in Northern Ireland.

There is currently a wide range of excellent examples of the power of partnership working for change, where service users and carers bring their valuable expertise and insights to help shape HSC to build a system that is patient-focused resulting in better outcomes for everyone. Some examples of these may be found on the Engage website [here](#).

This is a great opportunity – consider what would support you need to get involved and check out the bursary scheme and apply at <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/hsc/42ebdacc> **Closing dates for applications is 16 March 2022. Please note - all funding must be spent before 31 March 2022.**

Visual – PPI brand

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