

Introducing the Public Advisory Group (PAGs)

Swati Madhavji



Swaiti is an experienced public contributor, educator and co-investigator with a strong commitment to inclusion-focused research. She is a passionate advocate for ensuring Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) remains at the heart of all research projects.

Drawing on her lived experience, Swaiti has become an active Public Advisory Group member across a range of NIHR, PHIRST Light, HDRC, parenting and statistical methodology projects, including fellowship application reviews for the Royal Statistical Society. As an experienced Health and Social Care teacher, she also supports medical students and contributes to vocational and lifelong learning programmes. Through her work, she promotes equality and inclusion while ensuring public voices are heard and valued.

Swaiti is currently exploring how artificial intelligence can help reduce inequalities in research. She also brings experience as a community advocate, outreach and development worker, dementia champion, and has a background in environmental health and youth work.

Mandy Rudczenko



Mandy has a background in mental health nursing and adult education, bringing over 20 years of lived experience supporting her son to manage Cystic Fibrosis. She is passionate about ensuring that people and communities are meaningfully involved in shaping health and social care research and services.

Over the past decade, Mandy has contributed to a wide range of co-production and public involvement initiatives with organisations including the Academy of Medical Sciences, Health Data Research UK, the Health Foundation, University College London and the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

She has also written blogs and articles promoting shared decision-making and the value of public involvement, helping to ensure lived experience remains central to improving health and social care outcomes.

NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration: Leicestershire

Brian Simmonds



Brian Simmonds is a community advocate, cultural producer and social impact entrepreneur with a strong commitment to strengthening Black communities through wellbeing, heritage and collective empowerment. His work focuses on promoting health equity, community resilience and positive social change.

Drawing on extensive experience in community engagement and grassroots leadership, Brian works across the areas of mental health, community safety, cultural education and community development. Through initiatives such as Black Men's Health & Me, cultural events and heritage-based projects, he creates safe and inclusive spaces where people can share experiences, build connections and develop the skills and confidence needed to thrive.

Brian also uses digital platforms, creative media and community-led research to amplify lived experience, challenge stigma and promote meaningful engagement. Through his work, he helps ensure that Black voices are heard, valued and reflected in the systems and services that support their communities.

Sarah Leadbetter



Sarah is a disability advocate with a strong commitment to improving accessibility and inclusion for disabled and older people. As a visually impaired person and guide dog owner, she brings valuable lived experience to her work promoting equitable access to services and information.

Sarah volunteers with a range of organisations and campaigns to improve access to transport, technology and community services. She has championed issues including accessible public transport, better rural connectivity and the availability of information in alternative formats. Through her involvement with the Leicestershire and Rutland Guide Dogs group, she also helps raise awareness of visual impairment and independent travel, and how her guide dog, Nellie helps her live more independently.

Drawing on her personal experiences, Sarah is passionate about ensuring that health information, research and healthcare services are accessible and inclusive for everyone. She is committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented communities and helping to shape more equitable health and research outcome.

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Annie Bannister



Annie has a particular interest in the social determinants of health and the inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities. Her lived experience as the parent of an adult son with complex needs has shaped her commitment to promoting equitable access to health and care services.

Annie advocates for making information, services and physical environments accessible to everyone. Through her involvement in inclusion and accessibility initiatives, she helps ensure diverse voices are represented and that barriers to participation are identified and addressed.