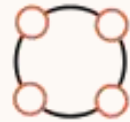




NATIONAL PERINATAL
EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTRE

Participant information booklet



Project PARTICIPATE

CO-CREATING RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN MATERNITY CARE CLINICAL AUDIT AND LEARNING

Introductory meeting information

Public and patient involvement in maternity clinical audit

National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre · University College Cork
September 2026

How to use this booklet

What this booklet does

It explains who NPEC is, what maternity clinical audit means, what patient and public involvement means, and what Project PARTICIPATE is planning next.

What this booklet does not do

It does not ask you to make a decision today. It is not a consent form, and reading it does not commit you to taking part in Phase 2 or any future activity.

How to read it

You can read the sections in order or go directly to the questions and answers at the end. We have kept the content consistent with the introductory meetings so everyone receives the same information.

A note on sensitive topics

Some people involved in this project may have had difficult maternity experiences. You are not expected to share personal experiences to contribute to PARTICIPATE.

Who is NPEC?

The National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre is a clinical audit centre based in Cork with a national remit.

NPEC is located within the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University College Cork and Cork University Maternity Hospital. It works collaboratively with maternity services to use clinical audit data and epidemiological evidence to support improvements in maternity care across Ireland.

National clinical audits include

- Perinatal mortality
- Severe maternal morbidity
- Registered home births
- Very low birth weight infants
- Neonatal therapeutic hypothermia

National reach

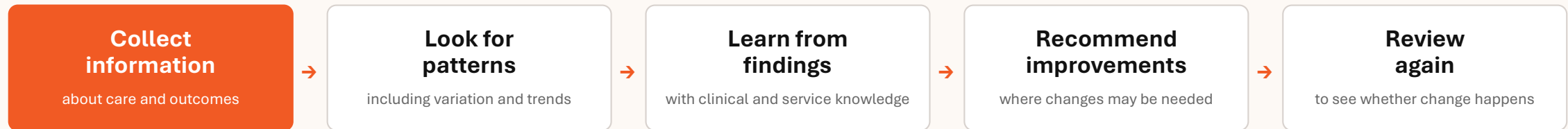
NPEC collects data from Ireland's 19 maternity hospitals and units. This gives a national view of key maternity and neonatal outcomes, while also supporting learning at local hospital level.



Clinical audit data represent real patients, families and experiences. PARTICIPATE is about strengthening the public voice in how this work is designed, interpreted and communicated.

What is clinical audit?

A structured way to review care and outcomes so services can learn and improve.



Why this matters for public involvement

Clinical audit has often been led by clinicians, researchers and audit staff. Their expertise is essential, but people who use maternity services may notice different things, ask different questions and bring different priorities.

The PARTICIPATE question

Where should patients and members of the public have a voice in maternity clinical audit, and what support would make that involvement meaningful and practical?

What do we mean by PPI?

Patient and public involvement means working with people, rather than only collecting data from them or sharing information with them.

“

Patient and public involvement is research or audit-related work carried out with or by members of the public, rather than to, about or for them.

In maternity clinical audit, this could include helping to:

- decide which questions or issues are important;
- review reports, summaries or public-facing materials;
- make information clearer and more accessible;
- interpret findings from a service-user perspective;
- shape how findings are communicated;
- contribute to advisory or governance groups.

What you do not need

You do not need previous knowledge of statistics, research methods or clinical audit before contributing. The role is to bring perspective, judgement and questions.

What you are not expected to do

No one person is expected to represent every patient, parent or family. Different contributors bring different experiences and priorities.

Three related ideas

Participation, engagement and involvement are connected, but they are not the same.

Participation

A person takes part in a research study or activity and provides data, for example by completing a survey, interview or focus group.

Engagement

The organisation shares information, raises awareness or has conversations with the public about its work.

Involvement

Members of the public actively work alongside the team and have an opportunity to influence the work.

PARTICIPATE is mainly about involvement: creating practical ways for people with experience of maternity services to contribute to clinical audit work.

What is Project PARTICIPATE?

A national initiative to strengthen public and patient involvement in maternity clinical audit.

PARTICIPATE explores how people with lived experience of maternity care can help shape how audits are designed, interpreted and communicated.

The project aims to:

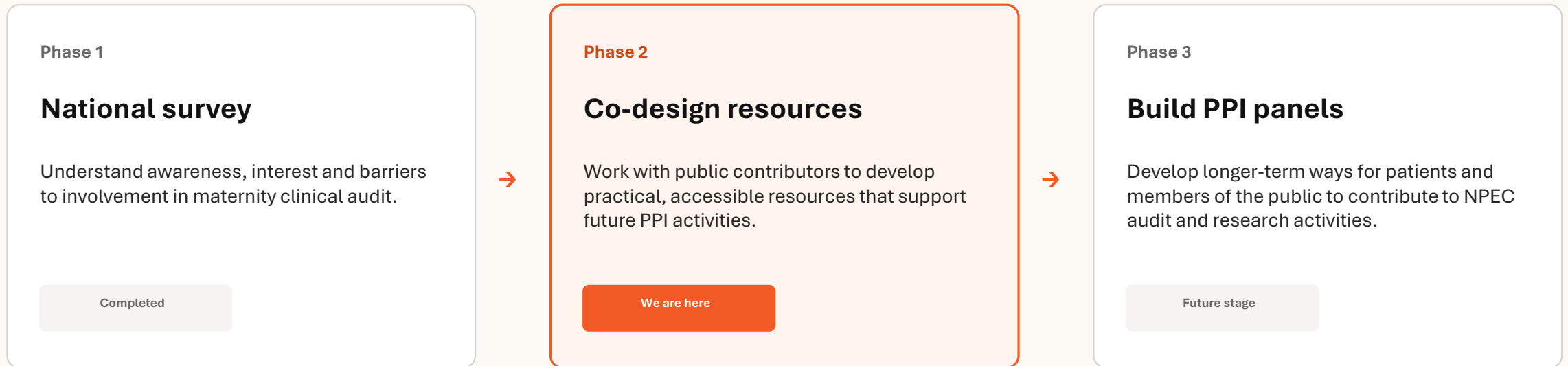
- understand public awareness and perceptions of maternity clinical audit;
- identify barriers and enablers to PPI in audit;
- co-create practical resources that support meaningful involvement;
- establish ongoing patient and public panels linked to NPEC.

The simple idea

Rather than NPEC designing a PPI model internally and asking people to fit into it, PARTICIPATE is intended to develop the approach with public contributors.

The project journey

PARTICIPATE is structured in three connected phases.



The project moves from understanding views, to developing practical resources, and then to longer-term involvement structures.

Where are we now?

Phase 1 is complete. We are now preparing to begin Phase 2.

257

people responded to the national survey.

98

people told us they would like to hear about future involvement opportunities.

39

people completed the detailed follow-up form used to understand practical preferences and areas of interest.

What this means for the introductory meetings

- We are not asking people to repeat information already collected.
- The introductory sessions are a bridge from “I am interested” to “I understand what Phase 2 could involve”.
- Formal survey findings will be shared separately when analysis is complete.

Phase 2: co-designing practical resources

The next phase is about creating resources that make public involvement in maternity clinical audit easier to understand and easier to do.

Core co-design group

Around 8–10 public contributors working with NPEC in a small group.

Three online workshops

Approximately 75 minutes per workshop, with the same group where possible.

Drafting between meetings

NPEC will prepare, revise and bring materials back to the group.

Wider written review

People who cannot attend the core workshops may still be able to review draft materials and provide feedback.

Current plan, not a fixed script

The practical details can still be adjusted where possible to support participation and make the process work well.

What might we co-create?

The resources are starting ideas for co-design, not finished products.

For public contributors

Clear information about what maternity clinical audit is, what involvement can look like, what people can expect, and how they can contribute.

For audit teams

Practical guidance on how to involve patients and members of the public meaningfully, accessibly and respectfully.

The workshops would help decide:

- whether these are the right resources;
- what they should contain;
- what language makes sense;
- what format would be useful;
- how they could be shared or used in practice.

What would taking part involve?

Participants would help shape the resources. They would not be expected to become technical experts.

If you join the core group, you may be invited to:

- attend three small online workshops
- discuss ideas and draft materials
- help decide what is clear, useful and realistic
- review materials between meetings where possible
- tell us when something does not work

You would not be expected to:

- have previous knowledge of audit or research
- speak on behalf of all patients or families
- share personal experiences you do not want to share
- agree with other contributors or with the NPEC team

NPEC's role

The NPEC team will organise the sessions, prepare materials, turn discussions into drafts, return those drafts for feedback, and be transparent about how input has been used.

Support, privacy and consent

Before any Phase 2 workshops begin, participants will receive more detailed information and consent materials.

Voluntary involvement

Taking part in Phase 2 will be voluntary. People can decide whether the opportunity suits them and can withdraw from Phase 2 if they later decide it is not for them.

Recording and notes

Phase 2 meetings may be recorded with permission and documented through anonymised notes. The arrangements will be explained before consent is requested.

Confidentiality

We ask everyone to respect the privacy of personal information shared by others. Contact details will only be used for agreed project communication.

Support and accessibility

If there are access, communication or support needs that would make involvement easier, participants can tell us before the workshops so we can plan appropriately.

Clinical care boundary

PARTICIPATE is not a clinical advice route and individual care cannot be discussed or resolved through the project. If someone needs clinical support, they should use the appropriate health service route.

What happens after the introductory sessions?

Everyone invited will be able to access the information, whether or not they attended a live session.

1

Receive the information

We will share the recording or presentation information with everyone invited to the introductory sessions.

2

Choose an involvement route

People can say whether they want to be considered for the core Phase 2 group, review materials, or simply stay informed.

3

Form the Phase 2 group

If more people volunteer than there are places, we will select a group that includes a range of perspectives and experiences.

4

Send workshop details

The Phase 2 group will receive dates, detailed information and consent materials before workshops begin.

Questions and answers

This section answers common practical questions about PARTICIPATE and Phase 2.

The questions below are intended to help people decide whether and how they might like to stay involved. If a question is not covered here, please contact the project team.

About the project

What is PARTICIPATE?
What is clinical audit?
Is this clinical advice?

About taking part

Do I need experience?
How much time is involved?
Can I review materials instead?

About privacy and consent

Will meetings be recorded?
Can I withdraw?
Will contributors be acknowledged?

Q&A: about the project

Do I have to join Phase 2 because I attended or watched the session?

No. The introductory session and this booklet are for information. You can decide afterwards whether you want to be considered for Phase 2, review materials, or simply stay informed.

Is PARTICIPATE a clinical advice route?

No. PARTICIPATE is about clinical audit, research processes and public involvement. We cannot discuss individual care or give clinical advice through the project.

What is the main purpose of Phase 2?

Phase 2 is intended to co-design practical resources that make public involvement in maternity clinical audit easier, clearer and more useful for both public contributors and audit teams.

If you already have starting ideas, is it still co-design?

Yes. The starting ideas provide structure, but the content, format and usefulness of the resources will be shaped through the workshops and review process.

Will the survey findings be shared?

Yes. The formal analysis of the Phase 1 survey will be shared separately.

Q&A: about taking part

How much time would Phase 2 involve?

The current plan is three online workshops of around 75 minutes each. There may also be opportunities to review materials between sessions, but this will be kept proportionate.

Do I need to attend all three workshops?

Ideally the same core group would attend all three so the work can build over time. We will confirm dates and expectations before anyone commits.

Do I need knowledge of audit or research?

No. We will provide the context needed. Public contributors are invited for their perspective, questions and judgement, not technical expertise.

Do I need to talk about my own maternity experience?

No. People can draw on personal experience if they choose to, but there is no expectation to share personal details or tell a personal story.

Can I contribute without attending workshops?

Yes. We are planning a wider written-review route so people can comment on draft materials without being part of every live workshop.

How will the core group be selected?

If more people volunteer than there are places, we will aim for a group that includes a range of perspectives and experiences, rather than selecting the first people who reply.

Q&A: privacy, consent and recognition

Will Phase 2 workshops be recorded?

The protocol allows for recording with permission. Participants will receive full information before Phase 2 begins, and written consent will be obtained.

What happens to what people say in the workshops?

The NPEC team will use discussion and feedback to draft and revise resources. Working-session input will be documented through anonymised notes.

Can I change my mind later?

Yes. Participation is voluntary. People taking part in Phase 2 will receive information about withdrawal before consenting.

Will contributors be acknowledged?

Yes. Contributors will be acknowledged appropriately in project outputs and publications, in line with the protocol and the nature of their contribution.

Will there be payment or expenses?

This is still being confirmed. We will be clear about what is available before anyone agrees to take part in a specific Phase 2 activity.

Will there be other opportunities after Phase 2?

Yes. Phase 3 will focus on longer-term public and patient panels, and there may also be smaller opportunities such as reviewing materials.

Interested in joining later?

This booklet is intended to remain useful as PARTICIPATE develops beyond the introductory meetings.

You can stay connected at different levels

You do not need to decide everything now. People may be interested in different levels of involvement at different stages of the project.

Phase 3: longer-term PPI panels

Later in the project, PARTICIPATE will support the development of public and patient involvement panels linked to NPEC audit and research activities.

What Phase 3 may involve

Future panel members may help shape audit priorities, comment on findings, review public-facing materials, advise on communication, and contribute to broader governance discussions.

How to express interest later

1

Visit the Project PARTICIPATE webpage

Use the NPEC website to check current updates and opportunities.

2

Contact the project team

Email NPEC if you would like to hear about future involvement routes.

3

Choose what suits you

Future opportunities may include workshops, reviewing materials, one-off tasks or longer-term panel involvement.

Thank you for your interest in public involvement in maternity clinical audit.

Stay connected

You can contact the project team or visit the NPEC website for updates.

Project contacts

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Project website

NPEC Patient Involvement
www.ucc.ie/en/npec/get-involved/

Project PARTICIPATE
www.ucc.ie/en/npec/get-involved/theparticipateproject/



Scan the QR code from the presentation materials, or use the website links, to stay informed about NPEC and PARTICIPATE updates.

Thank you for your interest in Project PARTICIPATE.