

Role description for BRUCES Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) Group members

What is the background of the BRUCES project?

A team at the University of Aberdeen are running a new research project called **BRUCES (Building Rural-Urban healthCare Equity for Scotland)**, funded by the Chief Scientist Office Scotland. The study team includes patients, doctors, and researchers with expertise in clinical medicine, health services research, health economics and human geography.

People living in rural areas (including small towns, villages and island communities) can receive less or different care from those living in urban areas such as large towns and cities, resulting in poorer health. To improve care, we need to better understand why rural health outcomes are poorer and identify ways to make it fairer.

The **BRUCES** project aims to understand how and why health and healthcare for people living in different types of rural communities differs from those living in urban areas, and how we can improve it.

Our research focuses on examples of common long-term health issues (**cancer, musculoskeletal conditions and frailty**) and will involve 4 steps:

- (1) Firstly, we will **bring together learning from our ongoing research** using large healthcare datasets to develop a detailed, rural-focused understanding of the health of people with cancer, musculoskeletal conditions and frailty. We will look at how they use health services and identify patients who may be disadvantaged. We will also **explore how local and national policies support care delivery in rural areas (or not)** and identify existing models of rural care in Scotland, the rest of UK and elsewhere that have worked well.
- (2) Secondly, we will **interview (a) people living in rural areas with cancer, musculoskeletal conditions and frailty** to explore their experiences of care and **(b) health and social care professionals delivering services to people living in rural areas**. This will help us set out **what 'good care' looks like**, the specific workforce challenges of delivering care to rural communities and what needs to be continued or changed to achieve good care across rural Scotland.
- (3) We will then **work out what aspects of care people living in rural areas value the most, and the costs of possible solutions** identified in steps 1 and 2. This will help us understand what modifications may need to be made to existing ways of providing care and will help inform our recommendations in step 4.



BRUCES

Building Rural-Urban healthCare Equity for Scotland



1495
UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN

- (4) Finally, we will **bring together work from steps 1-3 to prioritise actions to improve care for people living in rural communities** across our exemplar health issues and beyond. Working closely with the Scottish Government's National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Care we will test out our findings in workshops with patients, carers, health and social care staff, health managers, policymakers and academic experts. We will **create an action plan** to introduce and measure impacts of the most promising solutions, producing guidance to support local and national service planning.

The BRUCES Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) Group

Our PPIE members have already helped us write our research plans, ensuring a strong focus on patients and carers, and have helped us to better involve patients and carers throughout our programme of work.

To maintain a strong patient focus throughout our five-year project, we are now looking for **six people** to join the **BRUCES PPIE Group**.

The **BRUCES PPIE Group** will be led by a patient partner with experience of living with a long-term health issue in a rural area, along with a member of the research team. The group will work closely with other members of the research team to help guide our work throughout the project, test our findings and create action plans.

The nature of research work means there will be busier periods that require more patient partner involvement. As a result, you can expect your level of involvement to fluctuate throughout the course of the study.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for people who:

- Live with or have experienced of one or more of the following health issues: **cancer**; a long-term **rheumatic and musculoskeletal condition**; over 65 years of age and been hospitalised twice in the past two years (**frailty**).

AND

- Live in a **Scottish rural area**, including a **small town, village**, or **island community**, and have first-hand experience of the associated healthcare challenges.

If you do not have experience of one of the above health issues, please see the 'Other PPIE opportunities' section below for details of how you can still get involved with the BRUCES project.

What tasks might a BRUCES PPIE member be involved in?

As a BRUCES PPIE member, you will have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the project:

- You will be invited to attend approximately **three online meetings a year** to discuss findings, offer suggestions, and provide feedback to the research team.
- You will be asked to **review documents** prior to meetings and share your thoughts both during meetings and via email between sessions.
- You will play a key role in **testing our findings**, developing **action plans**, and **providing a patient or public perspective** in meetings and on study documents.
- Your feedback will help **refine the research**, improve **participant experiences**, and shape the **interpretation** of results.

What are the expected roles, qualities, and responsibilities of a PPIE contributor in the BRUCES project?

As part of the BRUCES PPIE group, you should be willing to demonstrate the following qualities:

- You have the ability and desire to **work as part of a team**.
- You have the time to **attend meetings** as your health allows.
- You should be **contactable by email and/or telephone** and respond in a timely manner to communications.
- You must be able to **maintain confidentiality**.

3. Time requirements and remuneration

We estimate the study will require a commitment of **approximately 12 hours over the course of a year**, which would include attendance at online meetings, preparation time for meetings and email input in between. We may seek additional input from the BRUCES PPIE group at key points during the study.

*You will be offered remuneration should you wish to accept it at **£75 per half-day** (up to 4 hours of completed work), budgeted at [UK NIHR-rate for PPIE contributors](#). This payment is to cover your time and any other associated costs e.g., printing, wireless connection costs.*

PPIE members will be asked to complete University of Aberdeen paperwork to process payment. It is the responsibility of the individual PPIE member to understand that these payments may have tax implications, and we cannot provide guidance for compliance.

4. Support and training

As a BRUCES PPIE member, we will give you access to any resources that are needed, such as literature or glossaries of terminology, to help you carry out PPIE activities for this study. We also have a PPIE training programme which we will make available for our patient partners, further details of which you can find [here](#).

We will support PPIE involvement by asking for regular feedback on your experiences so that we can respond to needs and concerns on an ongoing and timely basis.

Other PPIE opportunities – the wider PPIE group

We appreciate that not everyone can commit to being involved at the level described above, and we want to ensure that people can contribute as flexibly as possible when they are able to. Furthermore, depending on interest we may not be able to accommodate everyone who wishes to join the **BRUCES PPIE group**.

We therefore also aim to establish a **wider PPIE group** which will include people with a shared interest in rural health living in Scotland, including Scottish Island communities. Members of this wider group do not necessarily need to be living with one of the health issues mentioned.

We will keep this group updated on the project's progress and may reach out for input at various stages as needed. Remuneration for specific tasks will be in the form of vouchers to the value of £20 per hour, should you wish to accept it.

General Terms

- At all times we will treat each other in a professional manner with respect and courtesy. We will treat each other fairly, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socioeconomic background.
- The University of Aberdeen will keep identifiable information about you for the duration of the study. You can find out more about how we use your information, and the rights you have, by checking our PPIE privacy information at: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/research/epidemiology/bruces3084.php#panel3141>
- You can leave a role as a PPIE member at any time. Please contact us to let us know by e-mailing: bruces@abdn.ac.uk

How to register your interest

If you are interested in getting involved, please send an e-mail to bruces@abdn.ac.uk along with a **short statement summarising your experience** and outlining **why you would like to participate in the study**. Please note that you must reside in **Scotland**, and we kindly ask you to include your postcode.

In your email, please also tell us whether you are interested in joining the full BRUCES PPIE Group or wish to be considered for the. For those interested in joining the BRUCES PPIE Group there will be an informal and relaxed interview with the study team.

More information about the BRUCES study can be found here:
[BRUCES | The Institute of Applied Health Sciences | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/research/epidemiology/bruces3084.php)

Questions and comments

If you have questions or comments about any of the above, or the project in general, please email the study team at bruces@abdn.ac.uk.