

# Inclusive Involvement During COVID

## Transition from in-person to on-line

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### Introduction

- Involvement activities during COVID have had to adapt and change.
- Groups went on-line
- Those involved produced a series of blogs about their experiences
- Click here for blogs: <https://arc-oe.nihr.ac.uk/research-implementation/research-themes/inclusive-involvement-research-practice-led-health-and>

**“Offer Choice and do not let Zoom become the default”**

by Penny Vicary (read her [blog](#))

- Penny Vicary has been involved in research over the past 12 years and lives in rural North Norfolk.
- Penny does not have a lap-top, or broadband and uses her mobile phone for texts and conversations.
- Penny has continued to join meetings by phone and has papers posted.
- Penny has made a short voice recording to accompany this poster
- 10% of all adults are described as “internet non-users” ([ONS 2018](#))

**“If someone said to me, Patient and Public Involvement was always going to be in the house, you are never going to socialise with anyone...I would say forget it”**

### Public Involvement in Research Group (PIRg)

- Hosted at the University of Hertfordshire by Julia Jones
- PIRg established 2005
- Membership of around 15 people
- People with lived experience of health and social care
- Usually meets face to face 5 times a year
- Meetings went on-line in April 2020
- Support and on-line practice sessions were offered beforehand
- Four PIRg members wrote a blog about on-line meetings

### Young People's Advisory Group: Herts (YPAG).

- Hosted at the University of Hertfordshire by Kathryn Almack
- Started January 2020, a new group and welcome new members
- 13-21 years olds living in Hertfordshire
- The group helps researchers to improve the development and delivery of research that is about young people's lives.
- Meetings went on-line in April 2020
- We work in collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and a number of young people's groups including Live Life (Herts Young Homeless) and Hertfordshire Scouts.

“I think working remotely gives more scope to be flexible - it's been especially helpful recently when I've been having a flare up of symptoms and otherwise **might not have been well enough to attend a face to face PIRg meeting** (PIRg)”

“Zoom enabled me to continue to be involved during lockdown and I actually prefer it now especially as it saves me approx 4 hours travelling on 6 buses to attend meetings. It used to be very stressful waiting at bus stops with all the problems of public transport and quite tiring. Now I can **participate from home and would like this to continue** as it enables me to spend more time on other projects ....and helps me to manage my mental health conditions much better (PIRg).

“As the meetings have progressed, we have gotten into a routine where we **allow time for a quick catch up just like we would in person**. This has become a regular part of the meeting and **feels much less formal than some online meetings** and sets up a good tone for the rest of the session meaning we can interact with each other much more easily” (Daisy)

“I have loved how the group has continued the meetings throughout lockdown because it has meant that we have all had that normality and it is not something we are missing out on as a result of not being able to meet with many people face to face...I am enjoying the online meetings and look forward to each one just as much!” (Daisy)



“I think if people can be supported to be confident using new ways of meeting, **there's potential to be even more inclusive** - particularly for those who have frequent periods of poor health or mobility” (PIRg)

“Overall I find some practical advantages of working this way (e.g no need for travelling and lipstick) but other “social” disadvantages (eg lack of contact and socialising with “outside” people)” (PIRg)

“It is very easy to become isolated socially during this time (of lockdowns) but simply video-calling a friend really did help a lot with adjusting to a new routine and making things feel that bit more normal. I'm glad the YPAG meetings have continued” (Beth).

“I'm so pleased we made the decision to go online” (Kathryn)

“We've also shared experiences of the impact of COVID on our everyday lives. **It has helped us get to know one another and the meetings feel very relaxed while still getting on with the business of the meeting...** And I know that the meetings have been really valuable for researchers to get advice and feedback from young people” (Kathryn)

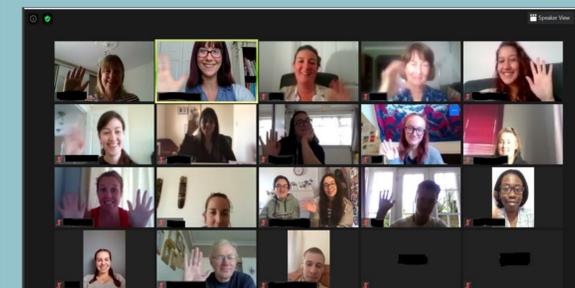
“Meeting by Zoom also has some advantages for young people who might feel anxious about being in meetings; **Zoom has the flexibility for someone to switch off their camera and microphone so in effect someone can listen in and perhaps join in more once they are feeling more comfortable to do so**” (Kathryn)

“Attendance at the meetings has been good and it clearly offers more flexibility for some PIRg members who, for different reasons, found attending meetings at the University a challenge at times” (Julia)



Research Study: Physical Activity for Depression in Young People

- Young Person's Advisory Group
- 15 members (13-17 year olds)
- Young Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire, Youth Council of Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Breckland Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Norfolk.
- Started in Nov 2019
- Also now on-line
- ARC EoE Affiliated Mental Health Theme



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### Helpful Guidance:

National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement  
<https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/meaningful-engagement-online-events>  
NIHR Guidance on Remote Workings Costs  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/centre-for-engagement-and-dissemination-recognition-payments-for-public-contributors/24979>  
Shared Learning Group  
<http://slginvolvement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Online-involvement-public.pdf>

Disclaimer: This is a summary of research supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration East of England. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

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