

**Patient and Public  
Involvement and  
Engagement Strategy  
2021-2026**

**Version September 2021**



## Glossary

Engagement	Where information and knowledge about research is provided and disseminated, for example science festivals, open days, media coverage
Involvement	Involvement in research refers to active involvement between people who use services, carers and researchers, rather than the use of people as participants in research (or as research ‘subjects’). Many people describe involvement as doing research with or by people who use services rather than to, about or for them
NIHR	National Institute for Health Research
PPI	Patient and Public Involvement. See the definition for involvement above
PPIE	Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement. See the definitions for involvement and engagement above
SPCR	School for Primary Care Research
SPCR member	A member is a primary care research group/department that has been selected through a competitive process to be part of the SPCR for 2021-2026. The members are based at the universities of Bristol, Keele, Southampton, Manchester, Oxford, Nottingham, Exeter, Queen Mary University of London and University College London
SPCR Trainees	PhD students and early career researchers and Fellows who are funded by the SPCR
SPCR PPI Leads	SPCR PPI leads are staff based at one of the members who support their organisation with patient and public involvement and have volunteered to represent their organisation within the SPCR PPI Lead Network. They are often employed as professional services staff, but PPI leads can also be researchers or programme managers



## Background

The aim of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR) is to strengthen the evidence base for primary care and support the next generation of primary care researchers.

The School was established in 2006 and started its fourth contract in April 2021 for a further 5 years. The School is a membership organisation and consists of nine primary care research groups at the universities of Bristol, Keele, Southampton, Manchester, Oxford, Nottingham, Exeter, Queen Mary University of London and University College London.

Each member of the School has their own, locally developed mechanisms in place for patient and public involvement and engagement. As such, this strategy should be read in the context of the School as an individual entity, where members can be inspired and supported by the School's strategy to strengthen their own way of working. Each member has identified a SPCR PPI Lead, who often supports involvement processes within the member and is a point of contact for the School.

The SPCR is committed to patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) and has a track-record of delivering a strong programme of activities. This strategy builds on the School's past programme, whilst providing strategic direction and guidance to further its development.



## Vision

Our vision with regards to patient and public involvement and engagement is:

**to establish a culture within the NIHR School for Primary Care Research where our community has the skills and resources to optimise and deliver patient and public involvement and engagement and it is integrated in to our ways of working and throughout the research we fund**



## Aims for Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement

The NIHR School for Primary Care Research aims to:

- I. Ensure our research community incorporates patient and public involvement and engagement throughout research
- II. Incorporate relevant involvement throughout our funding processes
- III. Lead by example in our involvement and engagement practice
- IV. Strengthen involvement and engagement practice of SPCR members
- V. Inspire and encourage inclusive, innovative, diverse and creative patient and public involvement and engagement
- VI. Improve the knowledge sharing of patient and public involvement and engagement



## Objectives

Each of the School's aims are supported by a series of objectives. Appendix 1 showcases how different actions are linked to each objective, their outputs and the timelines involved with the actions and how the values of the UK Standards for Public Involvement are informing the different actions. The objectives and actions are in place to transform the ambitions, outlined in the aims for patient and public involvement and engagement, into impactful contributions to support the SPCR's overarching aims of strengthening the evidence base for primary care and support the next generation of primary care researchers.

- I. We aim to **ensure** our research community incorporates **patient and public involvement and engagement throughout research**
  - a) All research funded by the SPCR must include appropriate patient and public involvement
  - b) The SPCR will collaborate, signpost and deliver patient and public involvement and engagement training to support it's Trainees and the wider primary care research community

- c) The SPCR will develop a funding opportunity for genuinely co-produced research
  
- II. We aim to incorporate **relevant involvement throughout our funding processes**
  - a) The SPCR will involve public contributors in shortlisting and decision-making processes within School managed funding calls
  - b) Within the first year of the contract, the SPCR will conduct a review, supported by the UK Public Involvement Standards, on its involvement of public contributors within the funding processes managed by the SPCR
  - c) Members of the SPCR will involve public contributors in the SPCR funding calls they manage
  
- III. We aim to **lead by example** in our involvement and engagement practice
  - a) The School will put processes in place to allow for diverse and inclusive involvement opportunities within the SPCR
  - b) The SPCR will seek out opportunities to share and inform their PPIE practice
  - c) The SPCR will continuously emphasise the importance of PPI for research
  - d) The SPCR will establish, recruit, implement and support meaningful opportunities for public contributors to support and influence the School's decision making
  - e) The SPCR will extend its engagement work to raise the awareness and profile of primary care research amongst the wider public
  - f) The SPCR will include public contributors in the recruitment of staff where feasible
  
- IV. We aim to **strengthen involvement and engagement practice of SPCR members**
  - a) The School will develop cross-member ambitions, based on the UK standards for Public Involvement, on the PPIE-support each member wants to have in place for researchers and public contributors affiliated with their organisation
  - b) The School will have support in place to encourage further development of member-led PPIE programmes
  
- V. We aim to **inspire and encourage inclusive, innovative, diverse and creative patient and public involvement and engagement**
  - a) The School will facilitate opportunities for their research community to learn from inclusive, innovative, diverse and creative patient and public involvement and engagement
  - b) The School will hold funding calls to provide researchers the opportunity to trial inclusive, diverse and creative PPIE in their research
  - c) The School will award prizes for researchers and public contributors to recognise innovative and outstanding PPIE
  - d) The School will identify communities which are under represented as public contributors in SPCR funded research and work with partners to improve recruitment of these communities
  - e) Research on patient and public involvement and engagement within the primary care setting will be eligible to apply for funding in SPCR funding calls

- VI. We aim to **improve the knowledge sharing** of patient and public involvement and engagement
- a) The School will create and facilitate opportunities for their research community to share learnings on involvement and engagement
  - b) The School will improve it's internal and external communications of sharing best PPIE practices within the SPCR



## Resources

The SPCR employs a full-time Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement Manager to lead and execute the School's ambitious programme. In addition, each member allocated a PPI lead as a point of contact for the School and to support member-led SPCR involvement activities.

The School commits to making funding available to compensate all public contributors involved in School activities in line with NIHR guidance. This includes time for preparing, attending, disseminating and training for relevant activities.

The School commits to provide funds for members to financially support strategic PPIE priorities and to reimburse public contributors involved in member-led SPCR activities.



## Monitoring, evaluation and success

The SPCR patient and public involvement and engagement strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the SPCR PPIE Manager, Board and Executive Board. Strategy reviews will be a regular agenda item for the SPCR PPI leads network, allowing them to give feedback on the School's progress in line with the strategy.

The School will investigate how it can meaningfully set up a reference group who can hold the School accountable for the execution of their involvement and engagement strategy. There will also be involvement of public contributors within the Executive Board, consisting of the School's directors, training leads and their deputies to emphasise and take accountability for involvement on the strategic agenda of the SPCR. In addition, two public contributors will be members of the School's Advisory Board.

Feedback will always be sought and more formal evaluations of involvement and engagement opportunities and activities will be done when there is an opportunity for these to inform future practice. A larger evaluation of the School's involvement and engagement programme will be performed as part of the mid-point review halfway through the School's contract.

There are several indicators that can measure the success of reaching the aims set out in this strategy:

- High review scores on involvement for submitted research and fellowship applications
- Number of attendees at training opportunities organised by the SPCR
- Feedback from SPCR PPI leads
- Feedback from public contributors involved in SPCR initiatives
- Feedback from researchers based at SPCR members
- Number of materials produced and views/ engagement with them

Improved diversity amongst public contributors involved in SPCR funded research The indicators will give insights in the impact that the SPCR patient and public involvement and engagement programme might have. Where feasible, the School will develop publications (either informal or formal) reflecting on the potential impact and make these widely available.



## Appendix 1 – Programme of Actions

I. Ensures our research community incorporates patient and public involvement and engagement throughout research			
Actions	Output	Timeline	UK Standards for Public Involvement
<b>I.a) All research funded by the SPCR is required to include appropriate patient and public involvement (PPI)</b>			
All funding applications will be reviewed on their PPIE plans, including the inclusion of sufficient PPI budget in line with NIHR guidance	PPI is included as a selection criterion in all review templates  Clear guidance in place for public reviewers on how to review applications	Continuous	Support and Learning; Impact; Governance
All successful applicants will be asked to report and review their involvement and engagement work annually and for their final report	Reporting forms which include a section on PPIE	Annually in Spring and at the end of each project	Impact
All PPIE sections of annual reporting will be reviewed by the SPCR PPIE Manager and if needed there will be a follow-up with the researcher	Quality control process of PPIE sections in annual reporting	Annually	Impact; Governance
The final report of SPCR grants will include an opportunity for public contributors to share reflections on their involvement in the project in a format they prefer	Updated final report form	At the end of each project; throughout the contract	Working together; Governance;
Student summer interns funded by the SPCR will be invited to join and present at a PPIE meeting	Annual PPIE meetings, organised by the SPCR, over the summer period in which interns can participate to experience how PPIE works	Annually	Support and Learning
An overview of publicly published PPIE guides (incl. information on giving feedback and holding inclusive meetings) and practical tips for researchers will be compiled, published on the SPCR website and sent with each SPCR award letter before they start their research	Overview developed by April 2022	Throughout the contract	Support and Learning, Inclusive opportunities, Working together

<b>I.b) The SPCR will collaborate, signpost and deliver patient and public involvement and engagement training to support it's Trainees and the wider primary care research community</b>			
Involvement and/ or engagement training on a specific element of involvement or engagement, emphasising its benefits, importance and practicalities will be included in the annual Trainees meeting	A training session tailored to the needs of SPCR Trainees at each annual Trainees meeting, where feasible co-designed and delivered with public contributors,	Annually	Working together; Support and learning
Involvement and/ or engagement training will be part of the SPCR online masterclass series.	At least one online training session per year, where feasible these will be co-designed and delivered with public contributors and collaborations to create these sessions with other (NIHR) organisations will be actively sought to widen their reach	Throughout the contract	Working together; Support and learning
Keep the involvement and engagement pages on the SPCR website up to date with clear signposting to publicly available resources	Relevant up-to-date webpages on PPIE on the SPCR website for researchers and public contributors	Throughout the contract	Communications; Support and learning
If gaps in available guides are identified by researchers, public contributors and/ or PPI leads the SPCR will develop these, where possible jointly with other (NIHR) organisations	Regular opportunities will be provided, i.e. via the PPI Leads Network, for people to raise potential gaps  If required, written, audio or visual online guides are developed	Throughout the contract	Support and learning
The School will work with their members and PPI leads to make PPIE templates, training and resources, developed within members, accessible to others in the School to use as inspiration	Regular requests for information sharing via the PPI leads network  Teams at SPCR members will be invited to deliver a previously developed training for researchers and/ or public contributors to the wider SPCR community	Throughout the contract	Support and learning; Working together
<b>I.c) The SPCR will develop a funding opportunity for genuinely co-produced research</b>			
The School will identify and create an opportunity within it's funding programme where there will be dedicated funding available for co-produced research	A funding opportunity where research submissions need to be genuinely co-produced with relevant stakeholders	By March 2024	Inclusive opportunities; Working together; Communications; Impact; Governance



<b>II. Incorporate relevant involvement throughout our funding processes</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>UK Standards for Public Involvement</b>
<b>II.a) The SPCR will involve public contributors in shortlisting and decision making processes within School managed funding calls</b>			
The SPCR will involve public contributors in the shortlisting stage of funding calls	Public reviews for each application that inform the ranking	Throughout the contract	Governance
The SPCR will involve at least two public contributors on funding panels	Public contributors as members on funding panels	Throughout the contract	Governance
The SPCR will involve public contributors in the shortlisting process of fellowships	Public scores for each application that inform the ranking	Throughout the contract	Governance
The SPCR will involve two public contributors in the interview process and decision making of fellowship awards	Public contributors as members on interview panels	Throughout the contract	Governance
The SPCR will make funding available to reimburse public contributors involved in funding competitions in line with NIHR guidance	Payment processes in place to reimburse public contributors for their time and travel/ virtual attendance	Throughout the contract	Inclusive opportunities
<b>II.b) Within the first year of the Contract the SPCR will conduct a review, supported by the UK Public Involvement Standards, on it's involvement of public contributors within the funding processes managed by the SPCR</b>			
The School will conduct a review, supported by the UK Public Involvement Standards, on how they can improve the way the SPCR involves public contributors reviewing funding applications. Recommendations will be based on feedback from public contributors who were part of funding boards and panels.	Clear recommendations that can be implemented in SPCR processes. It is expected that recommendations of the review will strengthen support for public contributors, increase diversity of the people involved in School funding calls and strengthen the review of PPI within SPCR applications	By April 2022	Inclusive opportunities; Working together; Support and learning; Communications; Impact; Governance
<b>II.c) Members of the SPCR will involve public contributors in the SPCR funding calls they manage</b>			
We expect members to involve public contributors in the appointment of SPCR-funded PhD students	Inclusion of the expectation in the appendix of the SPCR contract  Annual monitoring if involvement took place	Annually	Governance

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We expect members to involve public contributors in funding decisions of SPCR funding calls on a member level	Inclusion of the expectation in the appendix of the SPCR contract  Annual monitoring if involvement took place	Throughout the contract	Governance
The SPCR will advise members in how to involve public contributors in funding calls and where relevant develop guidance	Meetings and guidance will be established as requested by members	Throughout the contract	Support and learning; Governance
The SPCR makes funding available annually for members to reimburse public contributors in line with NIHR guidance who are involved in locally managed SPCR funding opportunities	Provide annual stipend for PPIE to members	Annually	Inclusive opportunities

III. Lead by example in our involvement and engagement practice			
Actions	Output	Timeline	UK Standards for Public Involvement
<b>III.a) The School will put processes in place to allow for diverse and inclusive involvement opportunities within the SPCR</b>			
Have clear role descriptions in place for involvement opportunities which include a description of the task, information on reimbursement and a named contact for support	Template role description for all SPCR involvement opportunities, customised for each activity	Throughout the contract	Working together; Inclusive opportunities
Involvement opportunities will be promoted via the networks of different School members to offer the opportunity to be involved in a national initiative to different public contributors	Opportunities being shared via the SPCR PPI Leads network	Throughout the contract	Inclusive opportunities
When a selection process is in place for involvement positions, apart from relevant (lived) experience a selection criteria will be to ensure diversity (in i.e. gender, geographical spread, ethnicity, age, experience) amongst the public contributors involved	Inclusion of selection diversity criteria in role descriptions	Throughout the contract	Inclusive opportunities

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<b>III.b) The SPCR will seek out opportunities to share and inform their PPIE practice</b>			
The SPCR PPIE Manager will actively seek opportunities to share the School's learnings on their PPIE practice with organisation within and outside the NIHR, such as the other NIHR Research Schools, the Society for Academic Primary Care and the Public Involvement Collaboration Group	The SPCR PPIE Manager will attend and initiate meetings that will allow the School to share it's practice and learn from others	Throughout the contract	Impact; Support and learning; Working together
<b>III.c) The SPCR will continuously emphasise the importance of PPI for research</b>			
The School will provide opportunities for senior researchers within the SPCR to showcase their support and commitment to PPIE	There will be at least 3 initiatives that showcase senior support for PPIE, for example case studies, talks, blogs and participating in/ leading PPIE training	Throughout the contract	Support and learning; Working together
The School will emphasise the importance of PPI in research in the description of it's funding calls	Updated guidance documents for funding calls	Throughout the contract	Governance
The School will provide feedback on PPI on all funding applications	Each applicant received PPI feedback from public and academic reviewers	Throughout the contract	Support and learning
<b>III.d) The SPCR will establish, recruit, implement and support meaningful opportunities for public contributors to support and influence the School's decision making</b>			
Two public contributors, one UK based and one from outside the UK, will be full members of the SPCR Advisory Board	Two public contributors as full members on the School's Advisory Board	By October 2021	Governance
Investigate the process, and if feasible implement, the inclusion of a public contributor within the SPCR Executive Board	Establish a meaningful and relevant mechanism to have public representation on the School's Executive Board  Recruit and support a public contributor in their role	Investigation finished by March 2022. If implemented, by September 2022	Inclusive opportunities; Governance; Working together; Support and learning
Investigate, and if feasible implement, the set-up of a public contributors reference group, reflecting the SPCR membership, to advise on the SPCR research programmes, priorities for the School and reflect on SPCR PPIE practice	Establish a meaningful and relevant framework for a reference group  Recruit and support public contributors in the reference group	Investigation finished by March 2022. If implemented, by September 2022	Inclusive opportunities; Governance; Working together; Support and learning

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Relevant customised training will be developed and delivered to support public contributors in governance roles of the SPCR	Tailored training developed for specific roles will be delivered as needed	Throughout the contract	Support and learning
All public contributors involved in the governance of the School will be reimbursed in line with NIHR policy for preparation time, attending meetings and training	Budget and clear payment processes in place	Throughout the contract	Inclusive opportunities
<b>III.e) The SPCR will extend it's engagement work to raise the awareness and profile of primary care research amongst the public</b>			
Initiate relationship building with organisations representing PPGs and patients, such as National Association for Patient Participation and the Patients Association, to raise the awareness of primary care in research	Ongoing relations with relevant organisations and where possible collaborations for events and activities	Throughout the contract	Working together; Communication
Organise virtual engagement events to make SPCR funded research more accessible to the public	At least 2 virtual engagement events making the research findings from SPCR funded work accessible	2024 & 2026	Communication
Hold funding calls to provide grants to SPCR funded research for engagement and dissemination initiatives	A recurring funding call that provides small amounts of funding for engagement and dissemination work	Starting 2022	Communication
<b>III.f) The SPCR will include public contributors in the recruitment of staff where feasible</b>			
Have a public contributor involved in the recruitment process of SPCR Directorate staff with a responsibility for involvement and/ or engagement	A public contributor involved in recruitment of staff with a responsibility for involvement and/ or engagement	Throughout the contract	Governance
Where feasible, public contributors will be involved in the selection of other SPCR Directorate staff	Where feasible, a public contributor is involved in the recruitment of SPCR directorate staff	Throughout the contract	Governance

IV. Strengthen involvement and engagement practice of SPCR members			
Actions	Output	Timeline	UK Standards for Public Involvement
<b>IV.a) The School will develop cross-member ambitions, based on the UK standards for Public Involvement, on the PPIE-support each member wants to have in place for researchers and public contributors affiliated with their organisation</b>			
The SPCR will collaborate with the SPCR PPI leads to identify joint ambitions of support for researchers and public contributors across the 9 members of the School	A clear document that outlines the ambitions and is supported by each member	By September 2022	Inclusive opportunities; Working together; Support and learning; Communications; Impact; Governance
<b>IV.b) The School will have support in place to encourage further development of member-led PPIE programmes</b>			
Each member will annually receive funds from the SPCR to reimburse public contributors who are involved in member-led SPCR funding calls, support researchers financially to do PPI at grant development stage and any other member PPIE strategic priorities	Annual transfer of funds to members	Annually	Inclusive opportunities; Working together; Support and learning; Communications; Impact; Governance
The SPCR will coordinate and facilitate the SPCR PPI leads network	Bi-monthly virtual meetings and an annual in-person meeting	Throughout the contract	Support and learning; Impact
The SPCR PPIE Manager will provide training and support where required by members to advise and signpost them in improving their PPIE practice	Regular contact between the SPCR PPIE Manager and SPCR PPI Leads	Throughout the contract	Support and learning

V. Inspire and encourage inclusive, innovative, diverse and creative patient and public involvement and engagement			
Actions	Output	Timeline	UK Standards for Public Involvement
<b>V.a) The School will facilitate opportunities for their research community to learn from inclusive, innovative and creative patient and public involvement and engagement</b>			
The School will organise training sessions on inclusive, novel and creative PPIE, which will be timed to coincide around the launch of SPCR funding calls to	At least two relevant training sessions will be organised to coincide with the launch of an SPCR funding call	Throughout the contract	Inclusive opportunities; Support and learning

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encourage researchers to use their new skills in upcoming funding applications			
The SPCR will make travel bursaries available for SPCR trainees to attend/ shadow involvement or engagement activities facilitated by other researchers to learn from them	A clear process for Trainees to apply for travel bursaries	Starting 2022	Inclusive opportunities; Support and learning
The SPCR will share best practices of inclusive, innovative and creative PPIE in various formats (i.e. webinars, blogs, recordings, infographics).	At least one output annually showcasing best practice of inclusive, innovative or creative PPIE	Throughout the contract	Support and learning, Communication
<b>V.b) The School will organise a recurring funding call to provide researchers the opportunity to trial inclusive and creative PPIE in their research</b>			
The School will continue to run their successful patient and public involvement engagement funding calls to provide funding for researchers to trial inclusive and creative PPIE	A recurring funding call with clear guides and support available for applicants	Starting 2022	Inclusive opportunities; Working together; Support and learning; Communications; Impact; Governance
<b>V.c) The School will organize an annual prize for researchers and public contributors who showed innovative and outstanding PPIE</b>			
The School will continue with their popular prize scheme which awards innovative and outstanding contributions of patient and public involvement and engagement by researchers or public contributors	A recurring competition to award prizes for innovative and outstanding contributions	Annually	Impact
<b>V.d) The School will identify communities which are under represented as public contributors in SPCR funded research and work with partners to improve recruitment of these communities</b>			
The SPCR will conduct anonymous surveys amongst public contributors involved in SPCR funded research to monitor the diversity of contributors involved in the SPCR research portfolio	An anonymous survey completed by public contributors which provides insights in the ethnicity, age, disability, gender, socio-economic status and other characteristics to identify diversity of the people involved in SPCR research. This will be conducted at least twice to identify potential progression	At least twice during the SPCR contract	Inclusive opportunities
Collaborate with relevant partners, such as specialist groups with expertise and knowledge in working with underserved communities, to develop support in	Support (i.e. guidelines, training or contacts) available for audiences underrepresented in SPCR research, based on the SPCR diversity survey for public contributors	Throughout the contract	Inclusive opportunities; Support and learning

recruiting public contributors from communities underrepresented in SPCR research			
<b>V.e) Research on patient and public involvement and engagement within the primary care setting will be eligible to apply for funding in SPCR funding calls</b>			
The School will include patient and public involvement and engagement as one of the research themes for competitive SPCR funding calls	Patient and public involvement and engagement is added as a research theme	Throughout the contract	Impact

<b>VI. Improve the knowledge sharing of patient and public involvement and engagement</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>UK Standards for Public Involvement</b>
<b>VI.a) The School will create and facilitate opportunities for their research community to share learnings on involvement and engagement</b>			
The SPCR will actively participate and initiate activities across the NIHR Research Schools that encourage cross-School learning of PPIE	At least one cross-School activity annually	Throughout the contract	Inclusive opportunities; Working together; Support and learning; Impact;
The School will investigate the interest for a PPI mentorship scheme for SPCR Trainees where either public contributors or researchers will take the role of a mentor to support early and mid- career researchers in doing their PPIE activities. If there is enough appetite for it, the School will launch and facilitate this scheme	Scope the interest in a PPIE mentoring scheme  Set-up a system and recruit and support mentors and mentees	If interest identified, launch by October 2022	Working together; Support and learning;
The annual showcase event for SPCR funded research will include an emphasis on PPIE	Different opportunities in place to encourage conversation on PPIE at the SPCR Showcase event	Annually	Support and learning; Impact
<b>VI.b) The School will improve it's internal and external communications of sharing best PPIE practices within the SPCR</b>			
The SPCR will use (annual) reporting cycles to identify best practices of PPIE and encourage researchers to share their work via various mediums	At least one case study shared annually showing best practice in PPIE in SPCR funded research	Annually	Impact

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The School will include the communication around PPIE in it's wider communication strategy	A communication strategy which includes PPIE	Throughout the contract	Communication; Impact
The School will collaborate with the NIHR and the wider health research funding community to share best practices	Take initiative and reach out to other organisations to collaborate when best-practices are identified	Throughout the contract	Impact
The SPCR will publish blogs on PPIE on it's website, and where needed actively approach people to share best PPIE practices, to compile case studies and support the evidence base of the impact of PPIE	At least 6 blogs per year	Throughout the contract	Impact



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