

## How Patient and Public Involvement Helped Shape the Molecular Targets website

### Background

The Molecular Targets Theme looks at how genes work in the body. Researchers use this information to find new drug targets for psychiatric and mental health conditions. The aim is to help create treatments that work better and have fewer side effects.

The Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre [website](#) used to describe this work in a very technical way. The text included lots of scientific terms and complex explanations. This made it hard for people without a research background to understand.

This webpage is often used to help new Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) members learn about the theme. But instead of helping them, the page often left them feeling confused.

### What we did

We asked our PPIE members to look at the webpage and tell us what they struggled with. They highlighted three key issues:

1. **The language was too complex** - There were many acronyms and scientific words that were not explained.
2. **The information was not easy to follow** - The page moved too quickly into technical content. Readers felt lost and unsure about what the text was trying to say.
3. **Too much detail** – There was more scientific information than most readers needed.

To improve the page, our public contributors rewrote the content with non-researchers in mind. They did the following:

- Explained technical words and acronyms and kept language simple
- Put the information in a clear order
- Removed details that were not needed

### What difference did it make?

We shared the updated version of the webpage with new PPIE members. They told us the page is now much easier to read and understand. They are now able to use it to learn about the theme. They said they can follow the theme's technical topics, such as how biomarkers are used in research. If they still have questions, the contact details for the Theme Leads are easy to find.

We also added an impact section, which shows what the theme has already achieved. This helps readers see the real value of the research. The work on the webpage also changed how we communicate in meetings. We now write out acronyms at the start and try to avoid using jargon.