

Research Design Service North West Public Involvement Fund

The aim of the fund

The Research Design Service North West (RDS NW) encourages public involvement at all stages of research and encourages researchers to budget for public involvement in research funding applications. However, we recognise that until research has been funded, researchers may find it difficult to pay for public involvement.

This fund supports the costs of involving patients and the public to form collaborations and relationships and support these collaborations during research proposal development, while researchers are in receipt of RDS NW advice. Involving patients and members of the public at the earliest stage possible will:

- develop better co-production of research
- help researchers to present a more compelling case for their study when submitting an application to research funding bodies and could lead to higher quality research design.

Amendments to the terms and conditions of the scheme will be made from time to time following evaluation activities. The amended terms and conditions will be posted on the RDS NW website (www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk/public-involvement/fund).

Who is eligible?

Researchers in the North West who are in receipt of advice from RDS NW:

- developing relationships with public contributors and beginning to discuss research initiatives
- developing proposals for national, peer-reviewed open call funding competitions for applied health or social care research.

At what stage in the design process can researchers apply?

Researchers can apply at any stage prior to final submission of a funding application, for example:

- when beginning to talk to the public about research
- when developing the application, refining the protocol or re-submitting a proposal following referee responses.

Applicants should discuss their public involvement fund application with an RDS NW adviser before submission, to get advice on the proposed activities and to ensure that the work being proposed is feasible in the time available to submission.

How much can researchers ask for?

You may apply for funds in the region of £350. We will also support reasonable extra costs for access requirements, see below.

Please note that your final award amount is the maximum you may claim back from the RDS NW for your public involvement activities and it must be for the same purposes that you have costed for in your application and not additional purposes. If following your award your plans or costs change, please contact the RDS NW in the first instance so that we can consider an amendment to your award.

What can researchers use the fund for?

Funds can be sought to undertake any of the activities listed below:

- to cover the costs of setting up meetings with groups of patients, carers, service users or the public. For example hiring a venue external to your organisation, providing refreshments
- to reimburse patients, carers etc. for their time
- to cover access requirements eg BSL interpreter costs, language interpreter costs, hire of hearing loops, special transport requests
- to reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by members of the public such as travel, subsistence and carer costs
- for materials which would not normally be accessible within your organisation.

How can researchers access the fund?

Applications can be made at any time of the year. To apply, please submit your completed application form together with the research protocol and/or a brief summary of the proposed research and plans for public involvement, around 250 words, to the RDS NW Coordinating Office, rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk.

Please note:

- applicants who choose to apply directly to RDS NW Coordinating Office without seeking public involvement advice from their front line adviser, must inform them that they have done so
- the fund must be paid to an organisation such as an NHS trust, a university or a formal community group with a bank account, rather than to individuals. Where individuals do not have these links please contact the RDS NW coordinating office for advice. Prospective applicants should liaise with their institution prior to applying for the involvement fund to identify local practices regarding management and spending of the public involvement fund, for example the procurement of refreshments and stationery, handling participant fees and travel expenses, etc.

Will receipt of public involvement funds be evaluated?

Yes, those receiving the fund will be required to write a short report stating:

- how the fund was used
- how public involvement contributed to the development of the grant application
- any particular challenges that were encountered and if so, how these were overcome
- whether the grant application was successful
- whether the relationship with the public involvement representatives involved in the funding application development is expected to continue longer term.

Fund recipients will be prompted by email to submit their report. From time to time we may seek feedback from public involvement representatives supported by the fund and we may ask you to pass on a request for a brief report on their experience

of involvement or an invitation to them to take part in our public involvement fund evaluation process.

Successful applicants will be expected to adhere to INVOLVE guidelines on good practice in public involvement (www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/library-resource/?id=403) and to agree to their public involvement fund application details being retained in an RDS NW database.

RDS NW will use the information provided to conduct its own evaluation of the public involvement fund, findings from which will be submitted as evidence to the funding body, The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Who decides which applications to fund?

Public involvement fund application decisions are made by the RDS NW Public Involvement specialist team. Applications will be referred to a member of the team by the RDS NW coordinating office. The team consists of a public involvement lead and three local area-based specialist public involvement advisers.

How quickly will a decision be made?

All applications will be acknowledged within one week and applicants will be notified of a decision within six weeks from the date of submission.

If your application is not successful on the first attempt, you will be given feedback and an invitation to resubmit your public involvement fund application for a second and final attempt.

Please note

Funding will not be awarded for public involvement activities that have taken place before the outcome of your public involvement fund application is known. Please be aware of the time frames for public involvement fund awards when making your application. If you require a quicker review of your application, please contact the RDS NW coordinating office to discuss.