

Public Involvement

Including the public in the development of your research
funding application



Applied Health



Social Care



www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk



What do we mean by public involvement in research?

Public involvement in research is the active partnership between patients and/or the wider public and researchers.

By patients and the public we mean:

- people who use, or have used, health or social care services
- informal carers and families
- members of the general public
- organisations who represent users of NHS and social care services and user groups.

Public involvement helps to ensure that research is relevant to the needs and views of people who use health and social care services. Public involvement goes beyond simply recruiting patients/members of the public as research subjects. This should be reflected by their involvement in any and all aspects of research including:

- the design and management of studies
- data collection and analysis
- the dissemination of findings.

Why is public involvement important?

The contribution of patients and their informal carers is valuable in providing a perspective to the research project that is based on first-hand experience. The shared views and concerns of the public can often be represented by user groups to complement individual perspectives. Most funders of research now require evidence of public involvement as a condition of funding.

“No matter how complicated the research, or how brilliant the researcher, patients and the public always offer unique, invaluable insights. Their advice when designing, implementing and evaluating research invariably makes studies more effective, more credible and often more cost efficient as well.”

Professor Dame Sally C. Davies, Chief Medical Officer.



When should I involve the public in the research process?

Although public involvement can be incorporated at different stages of the process, it is generally best to develop links with potential public involvement collaborators at the earliest stages of the project. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) suggest five key stages in the research process where involvement could take place. These are:

- co-production of research ideas
- design of the research
- development of the grant application, pre-protocol work
- undertaking/management of research
- analysis of data
- dissemination of research findings.

How should I involve the public in my research?

The NIHR Research Design Service North West (RDS NW) can direct you to useful resources on best practice in public involvement. Public involvement advisers can also offer personalised advice to help you develop an effective strategy for involving patients and the public in your particular research project.

RDS NW Public Involvement Fund

It is considered good practice to involve members of the public as early as possible in the research design process. Funding public involvement at the grant application stage can be challenging. The RDS NW Public Involvement Fund aims to bridge that gap. Funds are available to researchers to help facilitate public involvement in the development of research ideas and research grant applications. Please visit www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk/public-involvement/fund for more information.

If you are already receiving RDS NW advice on your project then you are eligible to apply for a public involvement fund. An application form is available from the RDS NW coordinating office or your RDS NW adviser/case manager. If you are not already in receipt of RDS NW advice then please see details on the last page of advice that is available and how to apply.



The RDS NW advice service

The RDS provides advice on research design, methodology, conduct and scope of funding streams including:

- formulating research questions e.g: literature reviewing database searches
- identifying and applying to appropriate funding sources
- contacting potential collaborators
- facilitating public involvement in research design.

Some of our research design expertise includes: (List not exhaustive)

- quantitative studies e.g:
 - systematic reviews
 - randomised controlled trials
 - observational designs
 - quasi-experimental design
 - epidemiological designs
 - economic evaluations
- qualitative studies e.g:
 - ethnographic designs
 - in-depth interview based studies
 - focus groups
- mixed methods
- participative designs and action research
- health psychology.

How do I contact the RDS NW?

For more information and to request advice, visit the RDS NW website or use the contact details below if you have any queries.

www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk

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