
INVOLVE

OPERATIONAL PLAN 2006/2007

1. Strategic Objectives

We have three strategic objectives to enable us to achieve our terms of reference. These are:

- to develop strategic alliances among key groups in order to maximise effective public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research
- to empower people to play an active role in research
- To create, gather, disseminate and promote the use of evidence/knowledge on the inclusive involvement of the public in NHS, public health and social care research

To take forward these strategic objectives and to further the principles and direction of INVOLVE outlined in the Strategic Plan (2003), there are five strands of work that are undertaken by INVOLVE.

- Raising awareness about the work of INVOLVE and the value of public involvement in research through:
 - disseminating information that is produced about public involvement in research
- Developing and taking forward strategies for influencing policy and practice
- Providing advice and support for the public, researchers and research funders through:
 - providing links to share knowledge and experiences
 - providing guidance to facilitate greater understanding about public involvement in research
- Assisting in the development of an evidence base to monitor the advancement, and assess the effects of, public involvement in research
- Capacity development of INVOLVE – through internal and external learning

2. Plans for 2006 / 2007

The following sections outline the proposed operational plan for 2006 / 2007, for approval at the March 2006 Group meeting. This plan was produced following discussions by the INVOLVE sub-groups (October and November 2005) and a meeting of the sub-group chairs (January 2006), to prioritise the work across the sub-groups. At the chair's meeting it was agreed that all committed and priority one activities should be taken forward as part of the Operational Plan for 2006 / 2007.

The total estimated cost is £151,000. This is higher than our anticipated funding of approximately £135,000 (£125,000 plus an additional £10,000 towards the conference for 2006/2007). However, inevitably some plans will get delayed or altered during the financial year and thus we anticipate that expenditure will be within the £135,000 budget.

Sections 2.1 to 2.5 summarise the proposed activities for 2006 / 2007. Details of proposed budgets are included in Appendix 1. More detailed information about the activities are included in Appendix 2.

2.1 Raising awareness about the work of INVOLVE and the value of public involvement in research through:

- **disseminating information that is produced about public involvement in research**

We will:

- Improve the accessibility of INVOLVE materials, processes and events.
- Continue our strategy for the publication and dissemination of INVOLVE publications
- Continue to develop the INVOLVE website
- Publish a regular Current Awareness Bulletin for INVOLVE members
- Make up to 20 presentations at conferences and workshops
- Organise and deliver the INVOLVE national conference 2006

2.2 Developing and taking forward strategies for influencing policy and practice

We will:

- Promote and support public involvement in research through the new structures outlined in the R&D Strategy

- Work with the Central Commissioning Facility and the NHS R&D Programmes to promote and support public involvement in research
- Work with the UK Clinical Research Collaboration and UK Clinical Research Network to promote and support public involvement in research
- Continue to support public involvement in the work of the Public Health Research Consortium, through the young people's reference group
- Work with the James Lind Alliance to promote public involvement in agenda setting in research.
- Meet and further develop partnerships with other organisations and identify and make approaches to champions
- Respond to consultation documents
- Represent INVOLVE on various committees
- Identify issues on which to take a public stand

2.3 Providing advice and support for the public, researchers and research funders.

- **Providing links to share knowledge and experiences**

We will:

- Organise and deliver the INVOLVE national conference 2006
- Develop invoNET, a forum for people with an interest in researching public involvement in research (including website pages and workshop)
- Develop our plans for a discussion forum, for individuals to develop or maintain an interest in public involvement
- Continue to publish our quarterly Newsletter
- Continue to develop our web based databases (database of research projects and database of training providers)

- **Providing guidance to facilitate greater understanding about public involvement in research**

We will:

- Develop guidance for involving service users on research ethics review bodies
- Produce a brief leaflet on good practice for public involvement in research
- Produce an information pack for the public on getting involved in research
- Explore ways of producing the information in different media formats
- Respond to enquiries to the Support Unit
- Present at conferences and workshops (see 2.1)
- Promote and disseminate our guidelines for public involvement in commissioning research

2.4 Assisting in the development of an evidence base to monitor the advancement, and assess the effects of, public involvement in research:

- **through undertaking or commissioning research**
- **encouraging others to undertake or commission research and**
- **monitoring public involvement in research**

We will:

- Commission a scoping study to explore the evidence on the impact of active public involvement in research
- Monitor the development of public involvement within the Central Commissioning Facility and NHS R&D Programmes
- Continue to expand our database of research projects involving the public

2.5 Capacity development of INVOLVE – through internal and external learning

We will:

- Continue to explore ways to increase public involvement in INVOLVE
 - Continue to explore accessibility and disability awareness issues within INVOLVE
 - Continue to monitor the work of the Support Unit
 - Support Group members, in engaging with the work of INVOLVE
 - Meet and develop partnerships with other organisations.
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3. Areas of work not prioritised for 2006 / 2007

Various potential additional areas of work were discussed by INVOLVE members in the process of prioritising activities for 2006 / 2007. Below is a list of proposed activities that it will not be possible to fund in 2006 / 2007. However, some of the issues identified will be explored and developed as part of the INVOLVE 2006 Conference.

- Guidance on research with black and ethnic minority communities
- Strategies to enable the public to contribute to the research agenda
- Investigation into researchers perspectives on the barriers to public involvement
- Dissemination of 'Colliding Worlds' video
- Paper on risk awareness and public involvement in public health research
- Development of guidelines on user controlled research
- Understanding of user controlled research from other perspectives
- User involvement in relation to commercial research

- Poster competition to promote public involvement in research
- Capturing data from available information on who is actively involving the public in research

Appendix 1: Operational Plan Budget for 2006 / 2007

Main Group budget Chair: Nick Partridge

ACTIVITY	Areas of work	NHS Social Care Public Health	Estimated Cost	Support Unit Lead
Support Group members / Group meetings	2.5	All	£25,000	Sarah Buckland
UK Clinical Research Collaboration	2.2 2.3	Health	No budget	Sarah Buckland
TOTAL			£25,000	

Empowerment sub-group Chair: Kate Sainsbury

ACTIVITY	Areas of work	NHS Social Care Public Health	Estimated Cost	Support Unit Lead
Improve accessibility of INVOLVE materials, processes and events	2.1 2.5	All	£12,000	Roger Steel
Leaflet on good practice for public involvement in research (to include design and printing)	2.3 (ii)	All	£5,000	Roger Steel
Information pack and multi media guide for getting actively involved in research for the public	2.3 (ii)	All	£20,000	Philippa Yeeles (Information Pack) Roger Steel (multi media)
TOTAL			£37,000	

Evidence, Knowledge and Learning sub-group
Chair: Sophie Staniszewska

ACTIVITY	Areas of work	NHS Social Care Public Health	Estimated Cost	Support Unit Lead
Dissemination of INVOLVE publications.	2.1	All	£5,000	Helen Hayes
invoNET forum (for people with an interest in researching public involvement in research)	2.3 (i)	All	£7,000	Helen Hayes
Scoping study on the evidence of the impact of active public involvement in research	2.4	NHS	£15,000 (year 1)	
TOTAL			£27,000	

Strategic Alliances sub-group
Chair: Stuart Eglin

ACTIVITY	Areas of work	NHS / Social Care / Public Health	Estimated Cost	Support Unit Lead
1. Guide for involving service users in research ethics review bodies	2.3 (ii)	All	£8,000	Roger Steel
2. INVOLVE conference 2006	2.3 (i)	All	£29,000 plus additional £10,000 from DH	Philippa Yeeles
3. Young people's reference group on public involvement (Public Health Research Consortium)	2.2	Public Health	£6,000	Philippa Yeeles
4. James Lind Alliance	2.2 2.3	Health	No budget	Philippa Yeeles
5. Guidelines for public involvement in commissioning research (dissemination)	2.3 (ii)	All	£1,000	Jane Royle
6. Discussion forum	2.3 (i)	All	£8,000	Helen Hayes
TOTAL			£62,000	

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST

£151,000

Support Unit
Director: Sarah Buckland

ACTIVITY	Areas of work	NHS Social Care Public Health	Support Unit Lead
Develop INVOLVE website	2.1	All	Helen Hayes
Publish current awareness bulletin	2.1	All	Helen Hayes
Respond to consultation documents	2.2	All	Sarah Buckland
Representation on committees	2.2	All	Sarah Buckland
Publish INVOLVE Newsletter	2.3	All	Roger Steel and Helen Hayes
Develop databases - research projects - training database	2.3 2.4	All	Helen Hayes and Roger Steel
Respond to enquiries to Support Unit	2.3	All	Helen Hayes
Presentations at conferences & workshops	2.1	All	All
Developing partnerships	2.2	All	All
Supporting public involvement in the Central Commissioning Facility and NHS R&D Programmes	2.2 2.3ii	Health	Jane Royle

Appendix 2: Job Sheets for Activities Proposed

Main Group

1. TITLE

A. Support Group members / Group meetings

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

Ongoing work to support group members and INVOLVE meetings

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

Ongoing work in arranging and providing secretariat support for both main Group and sub-group meetings. This includes arranging payments of members travel expenses and attendance allowances, as well as any training required.

There are four group meetings a year, including the annual awayday as well as regular chairs meetings.

4. TIMESCALE

Date started (if applicable)	Ongoing
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5. MILESTONES (if known)

Month	Activity
March 15th	Group meeting
June 8th	Group meeting
October 11th /12th	Group Meeting
December 14th	Group meeting

6. BUDGET

£25,000

Main Group

1. TITLE

B. UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC)

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

To promote and support active public involvement within the UKCRC across the different workstreams, and to provide support to clinical research and development arising from the increased R&D funding in the UK.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

UKCRC Board and Core Team

INVOLVE will seek to work with the core team to encourage and support public involvement across the UKCRC workstreams, taking forward initiatives as appropriate.

- Nick Partridge is a member of the UKCRC Board
- Sarah Buckland is a member of the Regulatory and Governance working group of the UKCRC.

UKCRN

INVOLVE will work with the UKCRN Coordinating Centre to develop plans for supporting both the work of the consumer lead within the UKCRN CC and within the networks themselves. This could involve responding to the support needs of the networks through for example developing guidance, and providing workshops, providing specific support to the individual networks, and the sharing of good practice.

Supporting clinical R&D in the UK

The increase in R&D funding for clinical research and its infrastructure will mean that the scale of research in the UK will increase substantially over the next few years. INVOLVE will seek to respond to the associated increase in demand for support and advice on public involvement in clinical research, through sharing and promoting existing resources as well as exploring the need for additional support.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	April 2004
Length of project (months)	Ongoing

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity

6. BUDGET

Amount	None
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SUB GROUP: Empowerment

1. TITLE

Improve accessibility of INVOLVE materials, processes and events

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

This project addresses INVOLVE's commitment to making the information that it produces, its processes and events, accessible to different audiences according to their communication requirements.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

INVOLVE is committed to ensuring that the information it produces is accessible to a range of audiences with specific communication requirements, and similarly that its organisational processes and events are genuinely accessible. It is necessary to acknowledge that there are limitations on what INVOLVE can achieve in terms of human, material and financial resources. However, this project takes on responsibility for improving INVOLVE's knowledge, understanding and delivery on accessibility issues within those resource limitations.

In 2006/07 the focus of this work will be:

1. To continue an Accessibility Working Group

- This Group will be comprised of members of INVOLVE and the Support Unit who have particular knowledge, skills and interest in the issue of accessibility.
- The group will work together at least four times a year.
- The purpose of the group will be to:
 - Develop INVOLVE's accessibility strategy and programme
 - Develop disability equality training for INVOLVE members
 - Address the issues of accessibility in relation to INVOLVE's processes, events and publications
 - Establish priorities for INVOLVE's accessibility programme
 - Monitor and review INVOLVE's progress on an annual basis

2. To establish a network of accessibility consultants

- The Accessibility Working Group will develop an accessibility network.
- This will be a network of people, including disabled people, who are not members of INVOLVE but who have specialised knowledge in one or

more areas of impairment and an interest in access.

- The purpose of this network will be to act as advisors and a sounding board in relation to the work of INVOLVE.
- Members of the accessibility network will be consulted as appropriate.

3. To audit INVOLVE from the point of view of accessibility

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	April 2006
Length of project (months)	12 months, but is an on-going commitment from one year to the next.

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
4 times in the year	Meeting of the Accessibility Working Group
	Establish the Accessibility Network
March 2007	Annual report

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£12,000
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SUB GROUP: Empowerment

1. TITLE

Information pack & multi media guide for getting actively involved in research for the public.

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

A replacement for 'Getting Actively Involved in Research: A Guide for Consumers', this pack would be produced in both hard copy and have a number of different easy to use and up to date multi media components.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

Much of the information in the current guide is out of date. It is proposed that INVOLVE break from producing a single, mass printed booklet style guide to a more flexible, accessible, up to date and interesting approach to guidance based on an information 'pack' using hard copy and web based interactive electronic multi media.

Some ground work has been done to explore the technical potential of using multi media with hard copy and an advisory group for this project has been established.

The initial cost of producing a pack is high, as it would involve using consultants for some of the components. As with other guides, it will also take considerable Support Unit time. However, once the pack is complete it is likely to be a lasting resource which is easily maintained and updated.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	2005
Length of project (months)	Until March 2007

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
March – June	Develop content of information pack
July - August	Production of printed copy
Sept - March	Development of multi-media version of guide

6. BUDGET

Amount	£20,000
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SUB GROUP: Empowerment

1. TITLE

Leaflet on good practice for public involvement in research

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

A short leaflet giving basic good practice guidance for public involvement in research.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

The leaflet would list points of good practice as quick reference guidance. It could be sent to research organisations for distribution among researchers and people they are involving.

The leaflet would give a more focussed good practice guidance than has been done by INVOLVE before. Ultimately however, the leaflet would aim to promote good practice in public involvement throughout the NHS, public health and social care world.

4. TIMESCALE

Date started (if applicable)	
Length of project (months)	8 months ?

5. MILESTONES (if known)

Month	Activity
	Write draft
	Consultation & feedback on draft
	Final draft
	Printing

6. BUDGET

Amount	Printing and Design £1,000 Workshop - £4,000
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SUB GROUP: Evidence, Knowledge and Learning

1. TITLE

Dissemination

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

During 2006/07 it is anticipated that several reports and publications will be completed, as well as ongoing dissemination of reports published in 2005/06.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

A dissemination strategy will be developed for all new publications. It is recognised that different approaches and methods for dissemination of the findings will be required for each report. This budget includes the cost of printing copies of the reports.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	2005
Length of project (months)	Ongoing

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£5,000
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SUB GROUP: Evidence, Knowledge and Learning

1. TITLE

invoNET

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

A forum for researchers with an interest in researching active public involvement in research. Website launch and first event March 2006.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

In 2005/06 the network for invoNET was launched. In order for the network to remain active and vibrant further development will need to take place. It is anticipated that recommendations for further work to develop the network will come out of the event in March. However consideration will need to be given to funding an annual event and further website developments during 2006/07.

The conference planning group is considering having a selection of themed sessions at the conference. The impact of public involvement in research has been suggested as a topic in the responses to questionnaires about ideas for the 2006 conference. If this topic is agreed by the Conference Planning Group then sub-group members would be asked contribute to the session by recommending speakers and facilitators. The sessions will be approx 1.5 hours long.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	2005
Length of project (months)	Ongoing

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
April 06/March 07	<p>Following launch event in March invoNET members will identify activities that are important for the network.</p> <p>Ongoing work to maintain and improve website, liaise with Management team and network</p>
September 06	Possible conference session
October– December 06	<p>Plan event for Spring 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify type of event eg several regional or one in central location • Identify and book venues • Plan and contact speakers and facilitators
December – Jan 06	<p>Publicise and send out invitations for event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final preparation
Feb/March 2007	<p>Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report writing
March 2007	Dissemination of report from event

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£7,000 (including annual event)
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SUB GROUP: Evidence, Knowledge and Learning

1. TITLE

A scoping study of the evidence of the impact of active public involvement in research.

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

It is proposed that this piece of work would be an overview or a scoping study to consider the evidence around the impact of active public involvement in research.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

This study could explore the evidence around the impact of active public involvement in research from the perspective of:

- The service user(s) involved in the research
- The research project itself
- The outcomes of the research

It would focus on the different perspectives and categories of evidence and the different perspectives of impact. There has been some limited work in this area.

The work of invoNET will also help capture information on evidence. Depending on timing invoNET will either contribute to the scoping study or the scoping study will contribute to the invoNET resource database.

This scoping study or overview could then lead on to either a collaborative piece of work or recommendations identifying research that other organisations could fund.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	April 2006
Length of project (months)	24 months

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
April 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of an advisory group • Agreement of the research question • Identification of individuals to assist in developing the brief • Selection of those to carry out brief writing
May – June 06	<p>Brief writing First draft to be presented to June sub-group meeting.</p> <p>Final brief by end of June 06</p>
July – October 2006	<p>Advertise and Invite tenders for work Agree and appoint for the work to be carried out Organise contract with DH</p>
November06	Project starts – for one year – first draft presented to sub group December 2007 – finalised March 2008
November 07	Project finished
December 07	First draft to the sub-group
March 08	Final report to the sub-group

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£15,000 (2006/7) £15-20,000 (2007/8)
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SUB GROUP: Strategic Alliances

1. TITLE

Guide for Involving Service Users in Research Ethics Review Bodies

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

It is intended that the guide will address two things:

- Firstly, to identify the principles and practicalities of the effective involvement of service users in ethical review bodies.
- Secondly, to highlight service user considerations when reviewing research applications.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

An aspect of the discussion at the 2002 and 2003 consultation workshops with social care service users and carers facilitated by INVOLVE on behalf of the Department of Health focussed on the need for direct service user representation on ethical review bodies. It was the view of many workshop participants that inclusion of service users would help ensure that the service user perspective was included in any deliberations on the ethical aspects of research proposals. It was also the view of participants that involvement of service users should be done well, equitably, and in a way that was effective and valuable for all stakeholders.

It was identified that a guide to involving service users on research ethics review bodies was needed. It would not only address aspects of involvement on the bodies themselves, but would also provide some guidance on reviewing research proposals that have implications for service users. This piece of work is relevant to perceptions of user research when ethical review bodies receive research applications identified as 'user led', or 'user controlled'. Initial work has been already been undertaken and we are working with the NHS R&D Forum on this project.

A preliminary consultation paper has been produced by Alison Faulkner to aid our understanding of the positioning of this guide with the broad range of stakeholders prior to the final work being started.

Pertinent to 2006/2007 is the need to resource the latter stages of the production of the guide itself.

▪ **Aims of guide:**

1. to provide a helpful, practical guidance 'tool' for professionals engaged in promoting and working towards user involvement in ethical review.
2. to provide written practical guidance about how to involve service users in ethical review bodies
3. to provide written practical guidance on assessing applications where there is service user involvement

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	2005
Length of project (months)	

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
April 2006	NHS R&D Forum workshop on ethical review of user research
July / August 2006	Develop paper for consultation
August / September 2006	Circulate paper for consultation
Autumn 2006	Stakeholder meeting
	Production of guidance

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£8,000
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SUB GROUP: Strategic Alliances

1. TITLE

INVOLVE conference 2006

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

INVOLVE's fifth national conference. Every two years the conference has provided a forum for people who are interested in promoting and supporting public involvement in research to learn, reflect and network.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

The conference is a non profit making event which is partly funded by conference fees but substantially subsidised by the Department of Health through this project.

The conference is managed through a sub committee of INVOLVE – the Conference Planning Group (CPG). Lester Firkins is a member of the CPG and Philippa Yeeles leads for the Support Unit on this project. The day to day administration of the conference is contracted out to an events' management organisation.

In 2006 the conference will take place on 6th & 7th September 2006 at the de Havilland conference centre at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield. The conference will run over a day and a half and accommodation will be available for delegates on site.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	ongoing
Length of project (months)	24 month cycle

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
Apr – Dec 06	Regular meetings of CPG

April 06	Designing & printing of booking form
May 06 onwards	Distribution of booking form & programme
May – Aug 06	Publicising event to ensure maximum attendance
Sep 06	Conference
Dec 06	Draft Conference Report

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£39,000
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SUB GROUP: Strategic Alliances

1. TITLE

Young People's Reference Group on Public Health

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

The Public Health Research Consortium has established a Young People's Reference Group to contribute to its research work on public health issues relating to young people. INVOLVE is supporting the development of this project.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

From October 2005, the Department of Health Policy Research Programme will fund, initially for 5 years, a Public Health Research Consortium. The Consortium will focus on strengthening the evidence base for health improvement and the narrowing of health inequalities. Initially it will undertake research on tackling health inequalities, risk and health, and incentives and regulation. INVOLVE was involved in the commissioning process for the Consortium. Since then, INVOLVE has worked with the Consortium in order to pump prime the development of public involvement within its research programme.

The primary aim of this project is to create a Young People's Reference Group on Public Health through which young people can contribute to the UK's public health agenda. The aims of the Reference Group are:

- to provide an opportunity for young people to articulate their views and priorities for public health, including public health research and policy
- to contribute to the work of the PHRC, INVOLVE and the National Children's Bureau (NCB)
- to feed into the work of other agencies seeking to promote the interests of young people and the development of public health

The desired long term **outcome** from the project is that both the research and policy agendas in respect of public health and young people is better informed, more relevant and therefore more likely to be successfully applied because of the inclusion of a young people's perspectives within the process.

Overall responsibility for the project lies with Professor Bob Broad, Director of Research at NCB. Day to day work will be managed by Anita Franklin, Senior Research Officer at NCB with specific responsibility for involving children in

research. Philippa Yeeles from INVOLVE's Support Unit will act as the liaison between the project and INVOLVE and will support the work of the Reference Group as appropriate.

INVOLVE, through the Strategic Alliances sub group, has agreed to provide funding to pump prime the first 12 months of this project. The project began in November 2005 and the PHRC is committed to developing and sustaining the Young People's Reference Group beyond 12 months.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	November 2005
Length of project (months)	12 months (with commitment from PHRC beyond 12 months)

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
April 06	Prep for meeting of the Reference Group
May/June 06	Reference Group meet
August 06	Prep for meeting of the Reference Group
Septem/October 06	Reference Group meet and/or Possibility of presentation at INVOLVE conference
Nov/December 06	Receive evaluation report
January 07	Disseminate learning from first 12 months

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£6,000 (£4,000 in the previous financial year)
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SUB GROUP: Strategic Alliances

1. TITLE

The James Lind Alliance

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

The James Lind Alliance is a coalition of organisations representing patients and clinicians collaborating to confront important uncertainties about the effects of treatments. INVOLVE is a founder, co-convenor of the Alliance.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

The James Lind Alliance was formed in April 2004. It is an initiative to open up discussion between patients and clinicians to agree on priorities for future research on the effects of treatments.

Initially the Alliance is being co-convened by INVOLVE, the Royal Society of Medicine and The James Lind Library. If by the end of 2006 the Alliance has begun to fulfil its objectives, Alliance members (pairs of organisations representing patients and clinicians) will then assume responsibility for the Alliance's management and development, taking over that role from the current co-convenor organisations.

The Alliance will be formed from a gradually increasing number of partnerships between organisations representing patients and organisations representing clinicians, working together to confront important uncertainties about the effects of treatments.

The Alliance will pursue its objectives through a process of meetings. These meetings will be held at the Royal Society of Medicine and will be jointly convened by an organisation representing patients and an organisation representing clinicians, who both share a common interest in a particular health problem or problems. The two partner bodies will decide the details of the agenda, and who should attend. Each meeting will be facilitated by a chair who has no vested interest in the particular decisions reached by participants. Each meeting will conclude with an agreement to take forward a joint action plan.

INVOLVE will work with the Royal Society of Medicine and the James Lind Library to promote and support the Alliance. Nick Partridge and Lester Firkins sit on the Alliance's shadow steering group. Sarah Buckland, Philippa Yeeles and Lester Firkins are assisting with initial partnership planning meetings.

From early JLA meetings, the following specific activities have been discussed as possible ways in which INVOLVE can support the Alliance.

- Help to identify and remain alert for prospective partners who would benefit from participating in a JLA working partnership.
- Share with the JLA any experience INVOLVE has in the work of prioritisation.
- Assist voluntary organisations to achieve effective public (e.g. patients, carers and service users) involvement in the development of JLA partnerships
- Provide support and guidance on running accessible meetings with patients, and clinicians.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	April 2004
Length of project (months)	Initially to December 2006

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
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6. BUDGET

Amount	None
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SUB GROUP: Strategic Alliances

1. TITLE

Guidelines for public involvement in commissioning research – Phase 2 Dissemination

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

Developing a dissemination strategy for INVOLVE's guidelines on peer review, commissioning boards/advisory groups and grant applications. Encouraging and supporting the implementation of the guidelines in practice.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

This project links with the work of the Evidence, Knowledge and Learning sub group in developing a dissemination strategy for INVOLVE. It also continues INVOLVE's work supporting research commissioners, members of the public and researchers in involving members of the public in the process of commissioning research.

To date the following draft guidelines have been produced:

- Public involvement in peer reviewing
(1 version for the public and 1 version for commissioners)
- Public involvement in commissioning boards and advisory groups
(1 version for the public and 1 version for commissioners)
- Public involvement in grant applications
(1 version for the public (as applicants), 1 version for commissioners and 1 version for researchers)

In 2006/07 this project will involve:

- Developing and implementing a dissemination strategy for the guidelines (including some printing costs)
- Exploring methods of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the guidelines

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	April 2006
Length of project	12 months

(months)	
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5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
April 06	Consult with stakeholders involved in development of guidelines on dissemination plan Guidelines disseminated to commissioners/funders, researchers, public By post On website on commissioners page + email alert Article in INVOLVE's spring newsletter
May 06	Draft strategy + liaise with Helen Hayes and other Support Unit staff
May 06	Discuss strategy with National Programme Managers
June 06	Discuss strategy with Strategic Alliance sub group
July – Sept 06	Presentations / workshops at events including INVOLVE conference
May 06 – March 07	Monitor use of guidelines
Mar 07	Present report to Strategic Alliances summarising use of guidelines

6. BUDGET

Amount	£1,000
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SUB GROUP: Strategic Alliances

1. TITLE

Development of a Discussion Forum

2. SUMMARY (30 words)

Proposal to develop a computer based discussion forum through which individuals and organisations can develop or maintain an interest in public involvement in research.

3. DESCRIPTION (300 words)

Based on the information gathered and research undertaken into how forum software is used, as well as the software capabilities, it is recommended that we set up and pilot a forum based on the free to download Snitz 2000 software. As the forum develops it will become more obvious which features are needed, and whether greater functionality is required.

The forum will have:

- robust security with user control, registration and password encryption
- email facilities
- facility for multiple moderators
- facility to create multiple forums
- ability to set up members profiles

Consideration also needs to be given to the ongoing moderation of the forum, which, if healthy and active will need about 1 day per week of moderation. It seems sensible that, during the testing and piloting of the forum, this function is taken on within the Support Unit, so that the full impact and implications can be assessed. However, in the longer term additional human and financial resources will need to be identified to carry out this work.

4. TIME SCALE

Date started (if applicable)	2006
Length of project (months)	Initially 12 months but potentially an ongoing financial commitment

5. MILESTONES (IF KNOWN)

Month	Activity
April 2006	Pilot phase begins
May-July 2006	Full testing of forum
August	Amendments as necessary
September 2006	Launch at Conference
January/ 2007	Evaluation and future recommendations

6. BUDGET

Amount?	£8,000 for ongoing commitment and development
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