

 **Further reading**

The following INVOLVE publications are downloadable (free) from [www.invo.org.uk](http://www.invo.org.uk) or please contact us for a hard copy:

- 'Involving the public in NHS, public health, and social care research: Briefing Notes for Researchers' (2004)
- 'Public Information Pack (PIP): How to get actively involved in NHS, public health and social care research' (2007)
- 'A guide to reimbursing and paying members of the public who are actively involved in research' (2006)
- 'Public Involvement in Research Commissioning Guide Series' (2006)
- 'Why people get involved in health and social care research: a working paper' (2006)

We wish to acknowledge:

- Faulkner A. (2005) 'Guidance for Good Practice: Service User Involvement in the UK Mental Health Research Network' Service User Research Group England
- The Learning Difficulties Research Team (2006) 'Let me in I'm a researcher!' Department of Health

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# INVOLVE

Promoting public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research

INVOLVE is a national advisory body funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to support and promote public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research.

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good practice



*National Institute for  
Health Research*

# INVOLVE

Promoting public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research

**Good practice in  
active public involvement  
in research**

**This leaflet describes public involvement in research and provides information for good practice.**



## What we mean by 'active involvement' in research

Active public involvement in research is different from simply taking part in a research study. For example, it can mean:

- helping researchers to identify and ask the right questions in the right way
- making sure that health and social care research is relevant to patients, people using services and the public
- getting involved in the research process itself, whether designing, managing, undertaking or disseminating research.



## What we mean by 'good practice'

- a) Allow time to plan for active public involvement
- b) Build respect and mutual understanding
- c) Ensure equal access to project activities
- d) Offer continual support to members of the public throughout the research process
- e) Consider methods of reward and recognition.



## Basic principles of good practice for your project

- a) From the beginning, plan to:
  - involve people with personal experience relevant to your research topic
  - involve people as early on in your project as possible
  - take into account diversity and equality issues

- involve more than one person in your project
- utilise communities and groups
- allow time to build relationships
- be prepared to negotiate the levels and types of involvement with the groups you want to involve
- offer individuals a choice about how they want to be involved in your project
- plan for sufficient time, and build in resources to support involvement.

### b) Aim to build respect by:

- reflecting on the value of everyone's time, knowledge and experience in all project activities
- negotiating 'ground rules' for meetings
- considering diversity and the cultural relevance of your involvement plans to those who should be involved.

### c) Ensure equitable access in your project by:

- giving clear, adequate and useable information in good time
- providing plain language summaries of long or complex documents
- using plain language in all communications
- where possible, giving plenty of notice for meetings
- ensuring meetings are inclusive
- ensuring venues are comfortable and accessible for all involved
- adjusting meeting times according to need and allowing time for breaks
- making adjustments for the particular needs of the individuals involved
- ensuring expenses are paid promptly.

### d) Support people in your project by:

- offering informal chats and an induction process at the beginning
- offering training/mentoring/guidance for both members of the public and researchers
- establishing networks, and good communication links for those involved
- offering support when involvement ends e.g. closure event, or helping individuals identify their next step.

### e) Offer reward and recognition by:

- acknowledging contributions and thanking people in person and in print
- considering the value of people's time and offering payment as well as expenses (in cash if possible)
- consider offering other benefits such as training, support with gaining qualifications, attending conferences, co-authorship.



## Applying good practice in your project

- The good practice points in this leaflet are just a starting point
- Good practice needs to be interpreted for different situations
- Practice should be evaluated and improved upon continuously
- Practice improves with experience; you don't have to be perfect from the start, but you need to be committed to improvement
- Some further reading is suggested at the back of this leaflet.