
INVOLVE

Minutes of the Strategic Alliances Working Group Meeting

Tuesday 09 October 2007

Present: Richard Baker, Sue Banton, Angela Barnard, Sarah Buckland, Chris Caswill, Simon Denegri, Stuart Eglin (Chair), Poonam Jain, Mark Petticrew, Jane Royle, Kate Sainsbury and Laura Serrant-Green

1. **Welcome, apologies, introductions, declarations of conflicts of interest and ground rules**

- Stuart welcomed the new group members: Richard Baker, Angela Barnard, Simon Denegri, Laura Serrant-Green and Poonam Jain. He also welcomed Mark Petticrew who was previously a temporary member.
 - Apologies were received from Carol Lupton and Marianne Miles
 - There were no conflicts of interest reported
-

2. **Notes of meeting held on 14th June 2007**

- There were no corrections to the minutes of the 14th of June.
-

3. **Matters arising**

Strategic Alliances grid:

The grid was a form produced by Strategic Alliances to collect information from working group members on any activities they had undertaken, either on behalf of INVOLVE, or where they referred to the work of INVOLVE. The forms had been circulated to all Group members to pilot the usefulness and feasibility of collecting this information.

Sarah Buckland reported that there was no feedback to date. The plan is to circulate the grid to new members as well as longer standing members. A couple of members reported that either they had not received the form, or they had not replied because they had not done anything in that period. Sarah proposed that the form be tried for a longer period.

Action: It was agreed to request information from all Group members for a further 3 months (September – November). The form would be amended to allow for people to indicate if they had not attended any events in the period.

Young Peoples Public Health Reference Group (YPPHRG) – annex G

Sarah reported that she had met with Louca-Mai Brady from the National Children's Bureau (who is also a new member of INVOLVE) as well as attended a meeting with the reference group. The YPPHRG have put in a bid to the Wellcome Trust to enable them to continue their work. The timescale to hear is January 2008.

Sue fed back that it had been helpful to read the report from the Group and that some of the ideas that the young people came up with were very exciting. It was suggested that there might be scope for INVOLVE to be a catalyst to get the YPPHRG together with other groups such as the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Medicines for Children research network. On a wider political note the involvement of young people is much supported.

It was also suggested that when the UK Clinical Research Collaboration Centres of Excellence for Public Health were announced, that there might be scope for them to link up with the Reference Group.

Meeting with Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

It was agreed to take this item under 5 (m).

4. INVOLVE Group networks revised – annex H

Sarah gave the background to this work. Following discussion at the June meeting the Support Unit had been asked to revise the table and quantify levels of involvement. Annex H shows the main organisations that the Support Unit has regular contact with and the level of involvement with each group.

There are two issues:

1. Do the 4 levels of involvement, engagement, co-operation and alliances sound right and would it be useful?
2. How does the involvement link with the Strategic Plan?

Members welcomed the document and felt that the proposed levels of involvement were useful and worked well. A couple of suggestions were made, to improve the document:

- objectives or targets should be added in an additional column, indicating whether there was an increase or decrease in level of involvement
- an additional category should be added of – no contact to date, but a strategic priority

There was a brief discussion on how the information linked to the forms being completed by Group members (see item 3 Strategic Alliances Grid), as well as to the overall strategic plan. It was highlighted how no royal colleges were listed.

Action: It was agreed that the table should be an agenda item at future working group meetings and that each category should be looked at and the group discuss whether and how to increase or decrease the level of activity with different organisations. The table would also be used to highlight gaps.

Action: Angela Barnard and Simon Denegri volunteered to help redesign the form to allow for the grid to be used to both monitor activity as well as assist in discussions.

It was suggested that it might be helpful to have a way that Group members could log onto the internet to record information for use by the Group as well as to be able to identify the most recent INVOLVE working documents. It was suggested that this could be via a members only webpage on the INVOLVE website.

Action: Sarah to explore the possibility of a members only section of the INVOLVE website.

5. Operational Plan 2007 – 2008

Please note that the letters refer to those used in the Operational Plan.

i) INVOLVE conference

Kate Sainsbury gave an update from the Conference Planning Group. The conference date has been agreed as 11th and 12th of November 2008. The conference themes have not yet emerged and the title of the conference is still to be agreed. The Planning Group would like additional members and it would be particularly helpful to recruit someone with a social care background.

It was suggested that an aim of the conference was engaging with partners and asked who the people are we are trying to reach out to and what the mechanisms are for doing this. It was also suggested that INVOLVE could link with others as conference partners for part of the conference.

j) Feedback on commissioning guidelines

Jane Royle reported that a draft survey has been developed in order to get feedback on the guidelines. We are currently exploring the possibilities of sending this out electronically to people who have downloaded the guidelines from our website.

k) Involving service users in the National Research Ethics Service (NRES)

Sarah reported on progress with NRES. INVOLVE had been invited to be part of a service user and carer advisory group for NRES, which had met for the first time in September. Roger Steel and Sarah Buckland were also working with the NHS R&D Forum and a lay member to organise two training sessions for NRES in October, on public involvement in research.

l) Communication strategy – Annex I

Sarah reported that the work for the communication strategy had been advertised with a closing date of the 5th of November. It was suggested that it might be helpful for the successful applicants, to attend the next INVOLVE working group meeting to present their ideas.

Action: Support Unit to invite successful applicants for the communications brief to attend December Group meeting

m) Social care examples – Annex J

This work is about to be advertised. There was a brief discussion of how social care research should be defined. It was agreed that it should be defined by the people who think they are doing social care research, and that we should not attempt to define it ourselves. It was also suggested that those commissioned to undertake the work should be encouraged to draw the net broadly in defining research. This work would be advertised shortly and would have an advisory group drawn from Empowerment and Strategic Alliances working groups. The work would continue into 2008 / 2009.

(m) Social care workshop – Annex K

Sarah briefly summarised the paper, annex K. The working group discussed how to take forward the plans for carrying out a workshop on involvement in social

care as well as working with the Economic and Social Care Research Council. It was suggested that INVOLVE should consider ideas to put forward to the ESRC which would both support activities proposed by INVOLVE as well as help take forward the strategic priorities of the ESRC. INVOLVE to consider producing a simple statement explaining how INVOLVE can and can't work with other organisations.

Action: Support Unit to take forward plans for the workshop proposed with the National Centre for Research Methods at Southampton University
Action: Support Unit to go back to the ESRC with proposals for working together in 2007 / 2008

n) **James Lind Alliance (JLA) – annex L**

The Group was referred to annex L for an update of activities of the James Lind Alliance.

6. Budget

There were no questions about the budget.

7. Operational Plan 2008 / 2009

It was noted that Strategic Alliances are already largely committed for 2008 – 2009. These are for the INVOLVE conference and for stage 2 of the work to develop social care examples.

8. Priority areas 2008 / 2009

There are 7 priority areas in the Strategic Plan. The working group discussed broad priorities to focus on next year, which fell within one or more of the priority areas.

The following broad priorities were suggested:

- i) Influencing policy and practice
 - Developing priorities for making alliances
 - funders
 - government (OSCHR)
 - social care community

- champions, pioneers and allies (other than researchers)
 - Research units (Research and Development Support Units)
 - academics (schools, teaching, academic, clinicians)
 - researchers
- ii) Helping create an environment that encourages and facilitates involvement
 - Hubs to support involvement around the country
 - Work with Group members to recruit people from their own networks
 - iii) Improving understanding of the extent, nature and effects of involvement
 - Pressure to recruit members of public
 - Recognising changing environment
 - iv) Encouraging further understanding of the value of involvement
 - Need to be clear about the benefits for users and carers of getting involved
 - Need to disseminate issues
 - v) Increasing understanding of the practicalities and opportunities for involvement
 - Communicating to the outside world how INVOLVE works
 - Working with communities e.g. need to work on a group basis as well as individuals/patients/carers, understanding gatekeepers in communities
 - Gluing and mapping existing capacity and expertise
 - vi) Developing role as conduit of expertise
 - Identify where lack of resources to meet demand
 - Increasing understanding in social and health research and develop core values
 - Need capacity to develop relationships with other groups
 - Developing relationships with other groups, to share and understand other areas of expertise in health and social care and to share load
 - vii) Regularly reviewing our processes
 - Creating and using network grid to understand strategic alliances
 - Accessibility, recruiting and working with service users

The following three topics were selected to take forward for further discussion:

- Developing priorities for making alliances
- Hubs to support involvement around the country
- Creating and using network grid to understand strategic alliances