Measuring the public involvement of children and young people in public health research
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Background
The drive for public involvement in public health research, from bid development to the dissemination of results, has stemmed from a plethora of influential bodies including the Medical Research Council and the Cochrane Collaboration (Booie et al., 2002). Advocates of public involvement believe some of the best research involves those who are affected by its outcomes, as the public can provide ‘knowledge in context’ which is different but equal to that of scientific experts (Popay and Williams, 1996). In practice several issues with public involvement have been found including (Staniszewska et al, 2011a):

- Poor conceptualisation of public involvement
- Poor reporting of public involvement in research papers
- A lack of a coherent theory that encapsulates all the dimensions of public involvement
- A paucity of tools to measure and evaluate the public involvement process and impacts

These issues have produced difficulties for researchers to find appropriate papers to review public involvement (Staley, 2009).

Design
The public involvement approach taken in DECIPHer, a research centre with a focus on children and young people’s public health, is to employ an involvement researcher (IYPRO). The IYPRO role is to development a public involvement Monitoring and Evaluation framework that will attempt to address the issues stated above, and to establish a young people’s advisory group to advise researchers on individual research projects throughout the research process.

A Monitoring and Evaluation framework has been devised for DECIPHer using the current literature on:

- The multidimensional theory of public involvement (Oliver, 2008).
- Lansdown’s (2006) work on the three dimensions to assess public involvement and
- Guidance for Reporting the Involvement of Patients and Public (Staniszewska et al., 2011b)

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
This framework is an attempt to define what data and how this data will be collected, in a research centre with a number of research projects, to monitor and evaluate public involvement. The framework tracks data for the dimensions of General public involvement needs, Research Project Information, Scope of public involvement, Cost of public involvement, Quality of the public involvement process, Short, Mid and Long term impacts of public involvement. Data analyses on the dimensions can give a clearer understanding of public involvement in research.

Main Findings, Conclusions & Implications
The framework has recently been devised and can be outlined however currently no findings or conclusions are available.