

Personal Impacts on Lay Reviewers – A Research Design Service South East Exploration

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Rationale

The Research Design Service South East (RDS SE) actively involves 9 lay reviewers in the following ways

- Lay reviews of research proposals
- Decision making for awards of RDS SE PPI grants
- RDS SE PPI Working group
- Other areas, for example marketing materials

Given the important roles that our lay reviewers have in the provision of the RDS SE, we wanted to investigate how this work impacts on them at a personal level.

Previous work on Impacts on the Public involved in research

There are two key reviews on the impact of PPI in health and social care research which identified challenges around describing, assessing, and measuring impact. As well as others, both reported on the theme of the impacts on the public

- Patient and Public Involvement in Research: Impact, Conceptualisation, Outcomes and Measurement (PIRICOM) study (Brett et al. 2009)
- INVOLVE 'Exploring Impact' Review (Staley 2009)

The Survey

- Fixed response questions designed around themes emerging from previous key reviews, including opportunity to expand on responses using free text boxes
- Further free text boxes also included to report on any Impacts not covered by questions
- 88% response rate

Key Findings

Survey results broadly followed the two previous major reviews, though not always for the same reasons.

The main theme to come from the current investigation was the role of feedback, as this has impact on our lay reviewers in numerous ways. Feedback relates to hearing about research bids with which they have had input, and feedback from researchers who have had a lay review.

Areas identified in the current study that were not previously identified by the previous major reviews

- Frustration with NHS funding bureaucracy

Areas identified in the previous major reviews that were not identified in this current study

- Emotional and time burden
- Work overload
- Not being taken seriously

What they Say

"I have learnt to be critical but fair when reviewing applications and have learnt the importance of viewing things from difference perspectives"

"I really enjoy doing the reviews and reading other people's comments on the same application – it's a chance to understand another's opinions and learn new insights"

"It is always fulfilling to hear the ones review has been appreciated by the applicant and that the comments have made a positive contribution to a successful bid"

"I feel satisfied when a review is successful and the researcher either comes back with a full RfPB application or they provide feedback from their PPI activities and say how useful they have been"

"When you receive positive feedback from researchers it is bound to increase your confidence, I think that it would be nice to get feedback more often as it's only quite rare that we receive it"

"I feel that the provision of a financial reward means that my reviewing work has value and is appreciated"

"I feel this (the ability to give back) because it's our opportunity to help researchers so we are giving something back to them and to the research community because that researcher will pass on what they have learnt to other researchers in terms of PPI. That can only be a good thing"

"Having been a patient and also seen medical practice from a non-clinical perspective I find reviewing enables me to represent the public viewpoint and hopefully influence and more PPI orientated research environment"

"I have been mostly involved with health research and Patient and Public Involvement for over 10 years and have mostly felt I was banging my head against a brick wall. However, I believe the medical profession is at last beginning to listen to the views from patients and the public and incorporating them in their research to enhance their bid for funding"

References

Brett, J., Staniszewska, S., Mockford, C., Seers, K., Herron-Marx, S. and Bayliss, H. (2009) The PIRICOM Study: A systematic review of the conceptualisation, measurement, impact and outcomes of patient and public involvement in health and social care research. London, United Kingdom: Clinical Research Collaboration

Staley K. (2009) Exploring Impact: Public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research. INVOLVE, Eastleigh.



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