

Future Directions for Learning and Development for Researchers and Patient and Public Involvement Representatives in the East of England

Doreen Tembo & Gill Green. National Institute for Health Research, Research Design Service for the East of England



National Institute for Health Research

Introduction

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Research Design Service (RDS) for the East of England is committed to promoting best practice in Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in research. Over the years the RDS and other partner NIHR and NHS institutions have engaged in a number of learning and development events for researchers and PPI representatives/services users who are/or wish to be involved in research. This poster presents findings from an internet based survey carried out in 2013 to explore further learning and development needs of service users and researchers in the East of England (EoE).

Methods

The total number of participants in the survey was 79 of which 74.7% were 'researchers' (RDS advisers, researchers, clinicians, research and development staff and PPI coordinators) and 25.3% were service users. Most of the participants were from Cambridgeshire and Norfolk (see figure 1). Survey questions allowed for participants to give their opinions. Participants were asked about:

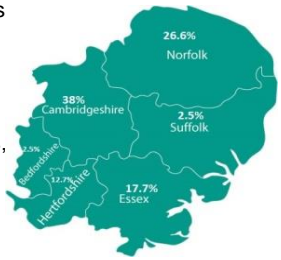


Figure1 : Percentage distribution of participants by County

- **What the focus of learning and development should be for both researchers and service users and the most effective way to deliver this**

Findings

The majority of participants understood what PPI was, although a few still expressed some misconceptions. Figure 2 shows the frequency of use of words from all the data provided by participants. The responses were categorised into manageable groupings.

Researchers were most interested in finding out about how to carry out PPI in the early stages and throughout the research cycle. Other common topics of interest included how to work with non experts (e.g. writing and speaking in plain English); involving the appropriate type of service user; ethics and confidentiality; sources of PPI resources. Researchers predominantly wanted to learn about PPI through various types physical events (workshops, PPI related career development course etc..) and a number wanted to learn through e-learning and multimedia. Other avenues of learning identified by researchers included training involving/or led by service users; case studies and how to guides; mentorship.



Figure 2: Wordle of participants' opinions

Researchers thought that service users should learn more about basic research as well as PPI roles in research. They thought that the best avenue of delivering this training was through physical meetings and resources as well as e-learning.

Service users felt that they needed training in different aspects of research. Other topics included improving communication and joint working with researchers. The majority preferred physical events to deliver training to meet these needs. Service users felt that researchers needed more training in joint working. Other commonly mentioned topics included benefits of PPI and communication skills. Service users felt the best way to deliver training to researchers was through physical events and resources, as well as e-learning.

Discussion

Courses and learning materials in the EoE should be adapted to meet the needs of participants as expressed in this survey. In particular adaptations should include improving joint working and communication skills. However the majority of the needs expressed are already being met through learning events in the EoE and regional and national resources available online. Awareness therefore needs to be raised about the availability of these resources.

Summary

- An internet survey involving researchers and service users was carried out in the East of England in 2013
- Many of the researchers surveyed would like to know more about PPI while service users would like to know more about research. Both groups wanted to know how to better communicate and work with each other
- Physical events remain a popular preferred mode of delivery for learning and development
- Organisations offering PPI learning and development need to adapt (by including joint working and communication skill training), advertise and promote their learning events and resources more widely to meet the needs of researchers and service users.

