

Issues to think about before you start – training

What is the best way to describe the ‘training’ you are offering? It may not always be appropriate to use the term ‘training’. This can suggest people are in some way deficient in knowledge and skills, which may not be true. It may be better to use one of the following terms – ‘briefing’, ‘induction’, ‘introduction’, ‘professional development’. Talk with the people you are going to train about their preferences for how the ‘training’ is described.

Can you offer people a choice about the form of training they take part in? Individuals may have different preferences and ideally for training to be most effective, it should match these preferences. However, with resource and time constraints you may not be able to offer a wider range of approaches.

Be clear about the purpose of training and explain this to potential participants. People need to understand what they are coming to and make an informed choice about whether they want to participate.

Training is integral to involvement. Include sufficient time for training. For members of the public, don’t expect people to give up extra time in addition to their involvement in a project or group. Make it an integral part of their involvement.

Recognise the limits of one-off training courses or conferences. A one-day event is not likely to equip everyone with all the skills and information to either ‘do’ public involvement or get involved – researchers and members of the public may value ongoing training and support. Consider formal and informal mechanisms to enable people to continue to learn about involvement, for example through workshops covering

specific topics, internal presentations from experienced researchers and members of the public, use of social media, online discussion forums and so on.

Be creative about access to training. Budgets for training can be limited and training that is useful to involvement might be available through local libraries, voluntary organisations, universities and higher education colleges.

Who is best placed to deliver the training? Think about who is the right person to offer the training and whether you need to bring in people from outside your organisation. Effective training may be offered by:

- people with expertise in the area who can champion involvement based on their experience
- external trainers (see [Things to think about when you want to find a trainer](#))
- members of the public with training skills and experience of being involved in research.

Shared learning from peers is very powerful and messages 'direct from the horse's mouth' can be more credible. Training delivered by members of the public, either alone or in partnership with researchers, is particularly valued by researchers (see [Compass report](#)).

Training researchers and members of the public together. This can help everyone to:

- clarify their expectations
- prepare for new ways of working and help with team building
- gain a shared sense of the purpose of the involvement.

Sometimes it may be better to train the groups separately, for example when people are just starting out and may prefer a group of peers to create a 'safe' learning environment.

