

Not if, but when

By Simon Denegri, Chair of INVOLVE

'If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs...'

So opens Kipling's poem 'If' as I am sure you know. Apt words for our times I would say.

Health and social care is going through a period of unprecedented reform. The challenges are immense. These are testing times even for those of us who have grown a strong constitution in the face of constant change.

But this is also a time of great opportunity and for public involvement in particular.

The Government's commitment to health research funding and the new onus on the NHS and other providers to live up to their responsibilities in research potentially gives us a better than ever foundation for our work. Whether we seize this opportunity is down to us.

With your help INVOLVE is now very close to finalising its strategy for 2012-2015. The message from you has been clear: 'Be ambitious, push on, just go for it.' Moreover, not to make complex that which is actually very simple: 'Putting people first in research.'

But the real difference, the real change, will be made on the ground by you and our colleagues in public involvement. The community is vibrant, energetic and creative. It also has huge stamina. Our task at INVOLVE and with our partners is to harness this into a movement that is single-minded and clear about what we want to achieve.

I prefer to talk about 'when' not 'if'. Do you agree?