

Training case study 11

Training needs assessment of researchers at the NIHR University College London Hospitals Biomedical Research Centre

Summary

Rosamund Yu is the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Manager at the Joint Research Office for University College London Hospitals (UCLH) NHS Foundation Trust, University College London (UCL) and the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust. Rosamund was appointed in January 2011 and tasked with developing PPI in biomedical research across the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) UCLH Biomedical Research Centre (BRC).

Why did you decide to carry out a training needs assessment?

Across the BRC there have been some examples of highly effective PPI but we wanted to find out more about how examples of best practice could be spread across the Centre. In order to embed PPI in research throughout the BRC, it was necessary to increase researchers' awareness of and develop their skills for public involvement. A survey was used to raise awareness, assess training needs and find out what would attract researchers to training for public involvement (for example topic preferences, time of day, length of sessions and so on).

We planned to integrate training for public involvement for researchers at the BRC into the usual programme of professional development training being offered to research staff at UCL/UCLH. Offering a training programme in public

involvement is intended to meet a number of aims for public involvement across the BRC, including:

- helping the researchers develop the knowledge and skills necessary for involvement
- helping researchers feel supported to incorporate public involvement into their research
- showing them it is expected and a normal part of doing research
- improving the quality of public involvement in research at the BRC
- encouraging involvement to be a positive experience for members of the public and researchers.

How were researchers asked about their training needs?

A brief [survey](#) was used to ask researchers about their training needs. Every effort was made to ensure the survey was quick and easy. It was available online and also given out at in-house research events, such as research governance training and a symposium for young researchers. There were few responses to the online survey until it was highlighted in an e-newsletter specifically targeted at biomedical researchers. 102 researchers completed the survey – about half online and half from events.

What were the main findings from the survey and what is being done in response?

Researchers indicated that training that focuses on the practical aspects of doing public involvement would be most helpful, in particular:

- how to write the PPI section of a funding application
- taster sessions on PPI
- a practical session for planning PPI
- effective partnership working with charities
- leading and managing PPI activities.

They indicated that sessions on general skills (for example chairing a meeting, verbal communication skills and facilitation skills) were less helpful. They preferred at least half-day sessions and most preferred morning sessions.

A training programme is being planned in response to the survey findings.

Contact for more information:

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The BRC has produced a [booklet](#) containing a range of examples of how patients and the public have helped with their research.

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