

# **Training case study one**

## **Training for researchers – a workshop designed by a virtual working group**

### **Summary**

This was a workshop on patient and public involvement in research with the aim of raising awareness of public involvement among researchers. It was led by patient and public involvement (PPI) managers in the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Trainees Coordinating Centre (TCC), NIHR Central Commissioning Facility and NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre. It was offered both as a one-day workshop and as a shorter breakout workshop within a two-day meeting for NIHR trainees (researchers with an award for research training from the NIHR).

### **What was the aim of the training?**

The aim was to raise awareness of PPI in the research community by targeted activities setting measurable objectives, enabling participants to:

1. Identify the reasons for involving patients and the public in the design and conduct of their research
2. Fulfil the expectations of funders and sponsors of health related research
3. Identify a range of resources and approaches to developing PPI in their research projects

### **Who was the target audience?**

The training was developed to be delivered to Trainees Coordinating Centre doctoral award holders. It was delivered at a dedicated one-day workshop in July 2011 and as two

workshop modules during the NIHR TCC Trainees' meeting in September 2011. This was a pilot to test suitability of materials and methods with this group with a view to wider development and dissemination.

### **What did the training involve?**

The full day workshop covered:

- Why is it important to involve the public in research?
- Public involvement in the research cycle – a mapping exercise for participants
- Examples of involvement in one area of clinical specialism
- Changing the culture – involving people effectively
- How do funders involve the public in their work? – case studies and group activities
- Action planning

The facilitators encouraged open discussion about participants' experience with PPI and 'reality checks' to draw out concerns and reservations. They invited researchers to approach the research from a patient or member of the public's perspective and included an NIHR public contributor as part of the design and delivery team. They provided participants with additional materials and signposting for advice and information, and encouraged discussion about the ways in which they might argue in favour of PPI with sceptical or uncertain colleagues.

The facilitators subsequently ran the workshop as a short module within a one-day meeting. In this case, they covered topics including: 'What can PPI do for you?', 'Key challenges in PPI' and 'PPI throughout the research cycle'.

### **What were the outcomes?**

1. The event objectives were achieved
2. The initial workshop was adapted into two PPI workshop

modules quite easily but with limitations

3. Materials from the workshop could easily be adapted and used by others in the NIHR.

**Who developed the training? Were members of the public involved?**

The training was developed by a project team through a virtual network using WebEx conferencing, email and telephone conferencing. The group was chaired and managed by Jo Powell, Senior Manager, Personal Award Team, NIHR Trainees Coordinating Centre, Leeds – who had originally identified the need for the training. Project team members included the PPI manager at the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility and the PPI manager at the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, two TCC award holders providing the researcher perspective, and a NIHR public contributor.

**Who delivered the training? Were members of the public involved?**

The training was delivered by the two PPI managers identified above, with input from a manager from the Personal Award team at TCC, a doctoral award holder and other members of the team including the public contributor.

**How did you support participants after the training?**

Participants were invited to develop an action plan at the end of the training, which the facilitators emailed to them three months after the workshop in order to remind them of the work they had done and plans they had developed.

**Have you evaluated the training?**

Feedback from participants on the day included positive comments about the interactive sessions, presentations and information about funders' requirements. In commenting on what could be improved, they suggested the need for more practical

examples.

## **Learning points**

- It was useful to organise the participants into groups according to their level of experience with PPI.
- The shorter workshops were less successful because they gave limited opportunity for participants to develop understanding or apply principles to their own area of research.
- Participants would have liked more practical examples, but found the mix of interactive sessions and presentations useful.
- The two main presentations that formed the introductions to the morning and afternoon sessions of the one-day course were delivered by Jonathan Tritter of Warwick University. It will not be possible to replicate this at future events, although the slides and exercises that formed part of his presentations could be used or adapted by other presenters.

## **Contact for more information:**

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