

# Training for public reviewers

The overall aim of training for public reviewers is to prepare members of the public to carry out reviews from their own perspective – not to try to provide a scientific review.

Training might involve:

- helping members of the public to recognise the skills and experience they bring to the review process
- helping people to develop the skills necessary for the task
- building people's confidence.

Training can be offered as an induction or 'briefing' session. It may cover:

- background information about the different types of research reviewers are likely to come across – if you are asking members of the public to review funding applications, this should include information about how funding decisions are made and the role of ethics committees
- explanation of what peer review is
- background to your organisation and its work – including how you currently use peer review, and how members of the public are currently involved in this process (or how you to plan to involve them)
- what you are looking for from public reviewers – this might include looking at other examples and at the paperwork you have prepared for people to use, for example scoring sheets
- discussion about the practical aspects of reviewing – such as the time commitment required, confidentiality and dealing with conflicts of interest
- chance to practise doing a review and to get feedback on this
- explanation of what happens after a review

- information about the support available to public reviewers.

If you are offering training to a group of potential public reviewers, ideally this training should be offered face-to-face. This will enable people to meet others, to share their learning and to give and receive support from peers.

Some organisations have developed written or web-based guidance targeted specifically at public reviewers. See those developed by the [National Institute for Health Research \(NIHR\) Central Commissioning Facility](#). If using this approach, following up with a phone conversation to check people have understood the guidance and whether they have any questions is important. If you are training a group of new public reviewers you could offer a teleconference so that people can discuss the guidance and think together about how they might carry out a review.