

## **Examples of public involvement in the Research Design Service (RDS)**

### **Public involvement in pre-submission review of research grant applications**

#### **Purpose of public involvement in pre-submission review**

Some parts of the Research Design Service (RDS) network offer a review by members of the public (often called a lay review) of draft grant applications prior to final submission to the funding body. This has been described by one RDS as an integral part of the process of supporting the development of quality funding applications.

Lay review prior to submission can serve a number of purposes:

- If there has been no public involvement in the research design, lay review can provide a non-scientific perspective on the draft grant application,
- Lay review can help to improve the quality of the research by checking the questions are relevant to public/patients and provide feedback on the clarity of the lay summary and any plans for public involvement in the research project.
- The RDS are using similar approaches to research funders - doing this demonstrates to researchers how public involvement will be part of the commissioning process.

Offering lay review to researchers and having public members on pre-submission committees can also help to demonstrate public involvement to the rest of the RDS team. Other staff in the RDS may have limited experience of public involvement but seeing it in action like this may help to develop their skills and ideas.

#### **How is it done?**

The South East RDS ([www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk/](http://www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk/)) has set up a public Peer Review Panel. Members of the public were recruited to this panel and by using a specifically designed review form, panel members are asked to comment on the extent and appropriateness of public involvement within draft research applications.

In the South West ([www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk/](http://www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk/)) and South Central ([www.rds-sc.nihr.ac.uk/](http://www.rds-sc.nihr.ac.uk/)) regions, public members are part of multi-perspective committees which review and discuss the draft research applications and provide feedback to researchers.

The North East RDS ([www.rds-ne.nihr.ac.uk/](http://www.rds-ne.nihr.ac.uk/)) has carried out a consultation, including gathering the views of the public/community groups about how best to develop consumer panels to carry out this role.

The East of England RDS ([www.rds-ee.nihr.ac.uk/](http://www.rds-ee.nihr.ac.uk/)) has made links with well-established, existing public and patient groups involved in research to provide researchers making grant applications with access to lay panels to review grant applications.

### **What is the impact of public involvement in pre-submission review?**

For the members of the public taking part, the reported impacts include learning new skills, increasing confidence with the task and having a real opportunity to influence research design.

Researchers have reported that they value the feedback from the pre-submission review and believe it improves the quality of their grant application.

One regional funding committee reported that they saw an improvement in the lay summaries of the grant applications once the public review in the pre-submission process had been put in place.

### **Where can I find out more?**

See report of the South East Peer Review Panel in INVOLVE (2010) Examples of training and support for public involvement in research: Sharing innovative practice workshop, pages 50-52 ([www.invo.org.uk/posttypepublication/examples-of-training-and-support-for-public-involvement-in-research/](http://www.invo.org.uk/posttypepublication/examples-of-training-and-support-for-public-involvement-in-research/))

This example has been produced by INVOLVE ([www.invo.org.uk](http://www.invo.org.uk)) working with members of the Research Design Service Involvement Forum. This Forum is facilitated by INVOLVE and brings together the patient and public involvement leads of National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Research Design Services. The Forum aims to support their work in advising on public involvement in research design and to share knowledge, resources and good practice.

For more information about public involvement in the Research Design Services see [www.invo.org.uk/find-out-more/information-for-researchers/research-design-services-information](http://www.invo.org.uk/find-out-more/information-for-researchers/research-design-services-information)