

Top Tips...

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Learning and development for researchers

These tips may help you to think through what knowledge, skills or experience you and your colleagues might want to develop to support your public involvement activities, and how you might support the public contributors you involve in your research.

1. Identify your own learning or development needs

Consider if there are any professional development opportunities that would help you or your colleagues to involve public contributors. Some opportunities to learn more about public involvement may be available via the 'Find and Share' website, where you can also see what others recommend. Skills that might support how you involve the public might include some of the 'softer' skills that are useful when chairing or facilitating meetings or discussions.

www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/learning-and-development/ [Coming Spring 2018]

2. Find a learning or development opportunity for you or your colleagues

You may be able to find suitable training opportunities for you or your colleagues through the 'Find and Share' website (above), or through your host organisation. Other research organisations may offer training, such as local universities, healthcare centres or NIHR organisations). Some charities offer public involvement training. Using the 'Find and Share' website, you can also recommend resources that you have found beneficial, which others may find useful.

3. Ensure that someone in your team has overall responsibility for public involvement

Someone in your team should lead on public involvement, helping to coordinate activities and support the public contributors that you involve. There should also be someone as a central point of contact for public contributors, should any problems arise. Some administrative support may also be required to ensure that things run smoothly.



You and your colleagues might support public contributors by using 'Learning Needs' tool to assess what the role requires, and what skills, knowledge and experience the public contributors already have. Discuss with public contributors how they prefer to learn or develop – some learn best by attending training sessions in groups, while others like to learn while doing the role, while others prefer to learn on-line or by reading into a topic. Much can be learned from attending seminars or conferences, where expert speakers or group discussions share knowledge and insights. It isn't all about training.

To enable the development of public contributors' skills and knowledge, you may need to have funding allocated to support these activities. The INVOLVE Cost Calculator can be useful when developing public involvement budgets for studies.

For some activities, it may be possible to observe others doing the same, or a similar role, to get a feel for the type of activity and the type of discussions they may contribute join.



These tips are one of a set, produced as part of the INVOLVE Learning and Development Project.

