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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.



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4. Support your public contributors to identify what they might need to learn or develop for their role, and how they prefer to learn

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.

www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/learning-and-development/learning-needs-and-tools/

5. Include learning and development costs for public contributors in your budget

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.

www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involvement-cost-calculator/

6. Consider offering a mentor or 'buddy' to support new members

This may be particularly useful for public contributors new to committees, panels or
groups. Many who are new to a role will benefit from having someone to meet or talk
to before, during and after the activity. This is often someone already active in the
group, panel or committee, and it allows an opportunity for the public contributor to ask
questions or raise any uncertainties about the activity. Sometimes all it takes is a

phone call from the mentor to discuss the agenda ahead of the meeting, or to offer

7. For public contributors new to a role, consider offering a chance to observe someone else in the role, if appropriate

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.

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feedback afterwards.

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

