

Action Plan for Public Involvement and Public Engagement 2025 – 2029

What we need help with:

We now need your help to review the draft document that resulted from these workshops.

Please provide feedback on the following:

1. **Overall impressions:** What are your thoughts on the document? Is it clear and does it meet your expectations?
2. **Clarity of goals:** Are our goals and objectives clearly defined in the document?
3. **Explanation of solutions:** Do any solutions or ideas need more detail or explanation? Are you clear on how they will address the problems?
4. **Concerns about activities:** Do you have any concerns about the proposed activities? Will they effectively solve the issues we've identified?
5. **Additional comments:** Do you have any other feedback or suggestions?

Why your feedback matters:

Your feedback is crucial because:

- **Ensure clarity:** It will help us ensure our goals and objectives are clearly communicated and understood.
- **Address concerns:** Highlighting potential issues with the proposed activities allows us to make necessary adjustments to ensure they are practical and effective.
- **Enhance effectiveness:** Your input will ensure the document effectively addresses the problems and achieves our intended outcomes, improving public involvement in research.

Your insights are vital for shaping a new Discover Your Role document that reflects our objectives and effectively communicates our plans. Thank you for your valuable contribution.

The following information was captured during the 2024 co-design and engagement events:

Problem Statements/areas for improvement

Resources

- **Insufficient funding for involvement activities.**
- **Lack of time allocated for developing public involvement activities.**

We understand that achieving meaningful public involvement requires both time and resources. Expectations from funders, regulators, and the public about what defines 'good' public involvement are continuously rising. To develop and achieve truly meaningful involvement, a creative and collaborative approach is essential. This includes learning from each other, sharing and pooling resources, and advocating for appropriate recognition of the costs associated with public and patient involvement.

Areas of focus

Explore creative strategies and models to optimise the use of current resources allocated to public involvement. Collect and share information about public involvement teams and existing resources to enhance collaboration and effectiveness.

Suggested actions

1. Form a Task and Finish group to explore cost recovery models for Public Involvement funding. The group will also consider whether a Wales-wide approach can be developed and implemented to share resources and improve public involvement efforts, collectively.
2. Strategic teamwork and collaboration with Public Involvement leads across Wales:
 - a. Develop a comprehensive database of public involvement leads: Create a database of all Public Involvement leads in Wales, including those from external organisations. This will facilitate collaboration and resource sharing when funding is limited.
 - b. Encourage collaboration amongst funded community: Promote collaboration among funded communities by requiring teams to share resources and information as a condition of membership in our involvement alliance.

Problem statements/areas for improvement

Inclusivity

- **Difficulty in involving under-served groups with limited time and resources.**
- **Need for more skill development opportunities for public contributors, such as chairing meetings.**

Involving under-served groups in research, under tight time constraints is a major challenge. Without a clear plan for involving these communities, they may be overlooked, which limits the diversity of perspectives in decision-making. Additionally, there is a need to provide public members with more opportunities to develop essential skills, to ensure meaningful involvement and that all voices are heard.

Researchers also face difficulties when trying to involve under-served communities in research and decision-making. Building strong connections with these groups is often challenging, made worse by the lack of specialised training on inclusive practices and the need for tailored support to involve these communities effectively.

Areas of focus

To address these issues, we propose building on the 2022/23 Health and Care Research Wales public engagement strategy 'Where would we be without research' by creating clear plans for involving under-served groups and offering more opportunities for skill development for both researchers and public members. This would include targeted outreach and training in key areas, such as meeting facilitation, to increase the inclusivity and impact of public involvement. This approach will ensure a wider range of perspectives are included and empower people to get involved more effectively, leading to more representative and meaningful outcomes.

We also propose using Health and Care Research Wales' Enabling Involvement Fund to help researchers connect more effectively with community groups. Providing specialised training for researchers on inclusive engagement practices, along with support from an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion advisory group and funded community initiatives, will

further enhance strategies for involving under-served communities. These measures aim to ensure that under-served groups are meaningfully involved in research and that their perspectives are well-represented.

Suggested actions

Provide opportunities for public members from under-served communities to help shape research, enhancing inclusivity within the research community. Focus on sustainable methods to ensure these communities are consistently and meaningfully involved in research activities.

Develop toolkits to support researchers to effectively involve under-served community groups in research, addressing barriers to involvement and ensuring inclusivity.

1. Implement a community outreach plan to enhance engagement with diverse community groups.
 - a. This will involve creating a customisable presentation template that can be adapted to meet the specific needs and interests of various communities, delivered in partnership with our public involvement leads, to ensure consistent messages and public involvement offers.
 - b. Development of key messaging for the research community to use when presenting to external organisations, ensuring consistent and impactful communication.
 - c. Build and maintain a comprehensive contact list of community groups and foster professional relationships with these organisations to facilitate effective collaboration and involvement.
2. Develop a comprehensive event guide for community engagement events that ensures the inclusion of diverse representatives in the planning, execution, and evaluation stages.
3. Identify and implement the best approaches for community engagement events, ensuring diverse representatives are involved in planning, delivering and evaluating. Including the development of a standard editable evaluation form to help with data capture and tracking.
4. Form a task and finish group to determine the best methods for involving under-served community groups in research and explore various sustainable models. Objectives of the working group to support researchers in Public Involvement:
 - a. Develop best practice guides to help researchers effectively connect with and engage community groups.
 - b. Create a clear, structured approach for researchers to reach and involve under-served communities.
 - c. Set clear guidelines for researchers to follow when using the new model to involve under-served community groups in research. These criteria should ensure meaningful involvement and fair access for these groups.
5. Involvement-specific training for researchers
 - a. Create and provide training programmes designed to inform researchers how to involve under-served groups in research effectively. These programmes will equip researchers with the essential skills and knowledge needed to involve these communities meaningfully.
 - b. Build on Allyship guidance and incorporate the findings from joint work with NIHR into a Health and Care Research Wales owned guidance document. Adopting a person-centred approach.
6. Partner with the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) advisory group and funded community organisations to design and deliver training for researchers. This collaboration will ensure that the training is relevant, inclusive, and reflects the experiences of under-served communities.

Problem statements/areas for improvement

Opportunities – Up-skilling public members

- **Opportunities often require prior experience, excluding newcomers.**

Public contributors may sometimes lack adequate opportunities for skill development, such as learning how to chair meetings effectively. This skills gap limits their ability to contribute meaningfully to research and decision-making processes. Additionally, there is a need for ongoing support and education to help public members enhance their abilities and participate more effectively.

Areas of focus

To address these issues, we propose expanding and diversifying skill development programmes for public contributors. This includes providing ongoing education opportunities and enhancing access to targeted resources. We will develop a comprehensive suite of training programmes and establish an annual training schedule based on a scoping exercise to identify the skills public members want to develop.

Additionally, we will involve the research community and Public Involvement leads in delivering this training to ensure it is relevant and practical. We will also leverage existing resources, such as those from the [Learning for Involvement](#) website, to identify applicable training modules. This approach aims to equip public contributors with the necessary skills and support to enhance their involvement and impact in research and decision-making processes.

Suggested actions

Expand and diversify skill development programmes, provide ongoing education opportunities, and enhance access to targeted resources for public members.

1. Additional support for public members – Up-skilling
 - a. Provide targeted support to public members to help them develop new skills and enhance existing ones. Develop training needs analysis to identify knowledge or skills gaps, to be captured upon registering to our community.
2. Develop a suite of training for public members
 - a. Create a comprehensive training programme tailored to the needs of public members. Obtain training modules and ideas by undertaking a scoping exercise with current and new public members.
 - b. Ensure that public members are informed about and have the opportunity to participate in relevant, high-quality training sessions
3. Set-up an annual list of training sessions
 - a. Plan and publish an annual schedule of training sessions for public members.

Problem statements/areas for improvement

Opportunities

- **The process for finding involvement opportunities is repetitive and time-consuming.**
- **Difficulty in finding a comprehensive list of available opportunities.**

The current process for getting involved in research is often repetitive and takes a lot of time, causing frustration for those interested in participating. Many opportunities require prior experience, which can discourage newcomers who are eager to join. Additionally, it's often

hard to find a complete list of available Health and Care Research Wales opportunities, making it difficult for people to know how to get involved. As a result, potential contributors may be put off by the complexity and time demands, leading to fewer people supporting research efforts.

Areas of focus

To address these issues, we propose optimising strategies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public involvement in research. This includes streamlining the application process to reduce repetitiveness and save time for contributors. To improve accessibility, we will create and maintain a comprehensive, easily accessible list of available opportunities, ensuring that interested individuals can find and engage with relevant opportunities more easily.

Suggested actions

Optimise strategies to ensure meaningful and effective involvement in research opportunities.

1. Streamline the application process:
 - a. Create simplified forms on our website – reducing the complexity of forms by only asking essential information. Auto-fill options – allowing for members to save their information and autofill forms.
 - b. Establish a Health and Care Research Wales Public Involvement working group, including researchers, public members and community leads, to assist the Public Involvement team in developing and implementing strategies for involving under-served groups. This group will focus on identifying and addressing barriers that prevent people from applying for research opportunities.
2. Offer suite of training to public members who want to continue their public involvement journey and up-skill
 - a. Develop training sessions for applicants on how to navigate the involvement opportunities. Develop a simple explainer video on how to fill in the expressions of interest.
 - b. Address the issue of opportunities often requiring prior experience by collaborating with researchers to clearly define the necessary skills. Highlight the value that fresh perspectives from public members without prior involvement can bring.
3. Target communications and opportunities for public members with relevant lived experience, using established networks rather than current blanket approach.

Problem statements/areas for improvement

Payments

- **Complicated payment processes that discourage involvement.**
- **Invoices often lack details, making it hard to manage finances.**

Administrative barriers, such as complicated payment processes, pose significant challenges for involving public members in research and decision-making. Difficulties with payment procedures can discourage involvement, particularly from certain groups or individuals who may find these hurdles difficult. Additionally, payment invoices often lack detailed information

about the activities for which public members are being compensated, making it challenging for them to track their earnings and manage tax filings.

Areas of focus

Streamline payment processes for public members and address administrative barriers to enhance their effective involvement.

Suggested actions

1. Build on the improvements made in the initial Discover Your Role project to further simplify payment procedures. This is part of the UK-wide public involvement team's efforts, working with to streamline and enhance the payment process.
2. Design, develop and deliver training sessions for public leads and finance leads to emphasise the importance of timely payment for public members and clarify the distinctions between involvement and employment.

Problem Statements/areas for improvement

Impact

- **Poor ongoing communication from study teams leaves contributors unaware of outcomes.**
- **Unclear how research affects Welsh services and the role of public involvement.**

Public members influence research in multiple ways, including both the impact on the research itself and on the individuals involved. One challenge in maintaining public involvement is the lack of consistent communication and feedback from study teams. This often leaves public members unaware of the impact they've made and study outcomes, which can reduce the perceived value of their contributions and lower their interest in getting involved in future projects. Involvement makes research more relevant to those who have conditions being studied or use services being researched, and therefore makes it more likely that research findings will have a material impact on the NHS service itself. However, there is often little clarity about how research findings shape Welsh services and the specific role that public involvement plays in these outcomes.

Areas of focus

To address these issues, we propose establishing robust communication channels between study teams and public contributors to ensure ongoing engagement and clear updates on study outcomes and how their involvement has or has not influenced the research. This will help demonstrate the impact of public involvement and keep contributors informed and motivated.

Suggested actions

Establish communication channels and mechanisms to ensure ongoing engagement from study teams and clearly demonstrate the impact of public involvement.

1. Develop and maintain a detailed guide and database to track and document the impact of public involvement in research. Additionally, define and clarify what is considered involvement impact activities.
2. Establish a mandatory system that requires researchers and public members using our support service to provide regular updates on the impact of their work.
 - a. Capture impact on research studies and share with our audiences

- b. Capture soft impact, difference involvement made to individuals
3. Establish effective methods for sharing and highlighting these updates with both researchers and public members.
4. Include examples of impact in engagement outreach programmes, celebrate and demonstrate impact of the public voice in research.

Problem Statements/areas for improvement

Discover Your Role evaluation

- **The overall impact of Discover Your Role and working to a collective plan to improve Patient and Public Involvement in Wales. How to monitor and capture this.**

There is often a lack of clarity regarding how research outcomes affect Welsh services and the specific contributions of public involvement. Without understanding these impacts, it's difficult to gauge the success and effectiveness of initiatives such as Discover Your Role. This uncertainty can undermine the perceived value of public involvement and hinder efforts to improve and expand these initiatives.

Areas of focus

To address these issues, we propose implementing a comprehensive evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Discover Your Role initiative. This framework will include developing specific evaluation criteria to measure success and determine the initiative's impact. Additionally, we will establish an advisory group to oversee and monitor the development and execution of actions in Discover Your Role. This will ensure ongoing oversight and provide valuable feedback to enhance the initiative's effectiveness and demonstrate the value of public involvement in research.

Suggested actions

Implement a comprehensive evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Discover Your Role initiative.

1. Set up a task and finish group to provide ongoing oversight, guidance, and feedback, ensuring continuous improvement of the initiative.
2. Develop an Evaluation Framework: Create a comprehensive framework to systematically assess the progress and impact of the Discover Your Role initiative tracking and analysing members of the community, diversity, and people applying for research opportunities.
3. Define success metrics: Establish clear criteria and benchmarks to measure the effectiveness and outcomes of the initiative.