NIHR | Research Support Service

Specialist Centre for Public Health
delivered by Newcastle University and Partners

Developing an information sheet for public and community contributors

Purpose of this resource:

This resource is designed to help you develop an information sheet with key information for your public and community contributors. The content in this document is not exhaustive and is designed to provide a starting point for the content you may wish to include.

We strongly recommend developing this resource with the public contributors you are working with to ensure it includes the information that matters the most to them, that the language and format is accessible and that it suits the needs of the research project.

If your contributors will be directly involved in research activities, you may wish to include an additional section on research ethics.

Public Contributor Information Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to be a public contributor for (name of local authority). This information sheet provides key information about this role.

1. **The purpose of the role and what activities you can get involved in**

Public contributors are members of the public who work alongside local authority staff and researchers to help shape:

- What research gets done
- How it's carried out
- How the results are shared and used

Public involvement is different to public or community members taking part in research as a research participant (for example filling in a survey). It is a more active role in which public or community members influence how research is done, so that it better meets the needs of the individuals affected by the topics explored.

Public and community contributors bring different ways of seeing things and can use their lived experience to:

- Make research more relevant (by sharing what is important to local communities)
- Make the language used in research more accessible (for example through easy-to-read flyers, face to face meetings with communities)
- Improve the experience of those taking part in research
- Identify ways for more communities to take part in research

2. **How to get involved**

As a public contributor at (add name of local authority), you can get involved in the following activities (amend as appropriate):

- Being part of a steering or advisory group (to shape the overall direction of research)
- Planning events for public involvement
- Reviewing documents
- Sharing research findings
- Designing and delivering research as a community co-researcher/peer researcher

You may wish to add more detail around specific public involvement activities such as advisory group meetings and practical details about when and where meetings are held.

You may also wish to add details about the time commitment associated with some activities, such as being part of an advisory group.

3. Training and support for public contributors

We provide training and ongoing support for all our public contributors.

Induction

When you start your role, we will provide introductions to the research done by the local authority and other key topics such as data protection and confidentiality and how to make research fair for everyone.

We suggest you may wish to state whether training is optional or mandatory for public contributors and why. Some public or community contributors may be put off by mandatory training, but it is important to ensure that public and community contributors fully understand their responsibilities around data protection, ethics and safeguarding.

One to one sessions

We will meet with you every (add frequency) months to check in on how you are finding your role and whether you need any additional support.

We will discuss any additional support you may need to be able to fully contribute at our first one to one session.

We will also review any further training you need for your public contributor role.

References

We can provide a reference for anyone who is involved as a public contributor.

4. Payment and Recognition

Add details of how you compensate public contributors for their time and how they can claim (both payment and non-pay awards e.g. training etc).

You may also wish to include details of non-financial recognition e.g. acknowledgment on publications, development opportunities etc.

5. Data protection and confidentiality

As a public contributor, you may have access to sensitive information. As a local authority we have strict legal obligations about how we handle and use data. We will provide training on your responsibilities as a public contributor and the importance of treating this information in a discreet and confidential manner. This includes not

passing any information on to any third party. We will ensure that any personal data you provide us is stored securely, in line with our data protection policy.

You may wish to ask public contributors to sign a confidentiality agreement.

6. Safeguarding

Local authorities have a legal duty to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. We will share our safeguarding processes with you as part of your induction, so you are confident about how to protect yourself and others during research activities.

7. Ways of working and inclusivity

We want all our public contributors to feel comfortable and able to contribute. We ask everyone to review and sign a 'ways of working document' which creates an agreement on how we will work respectfully together.

We will speak to all public contributors individually about additional support they may need to be able to contribute fully.

8. Who to contact with any questions

If you have any questions, you can contact (add name and contact details) or (add name and contact details)

We suggest including two contacts here, the main lead for public involvement and a supervisor or manager that can be contacted if needed.

You may also wish to add detail of any specific processes to be followed if a public or community contributor has a complaint they wish to raise, formally or informally and your local authority complaints process.