NIHR | Research Support Service

Specialist Centre for Public Health
delivered by Newcastle University and Partners

Resourcing public and community involvement in research governance in your local authority

Introduction to this guidance

Members of the public and community may be involved in your research in several different ways. This could include:

1. Public and community contributors who are part of the overall governance around research in your organisation. This could involve members of an advisory board for example.
2. Public and community members who are involved in individual research projects and who take a leading role in shaping, delivering, and presenting the research. This role is often referred to as a community or peer researcher.
3. Public or (and) community members who take part in your research as participants, for example answering a survey or taking part in an interview or focus group.

This checklist is aimed at helping colleagues in local authorities to think through some of the practicalities and costs of working with members of the public and community in a governance or strategic capacity across your whole local authority.

Definitions of involvement, engagement and participation

Researchers and others use a variety of words to describe ways of interacting with the public. NIHR defines the terms involvement, engagement and participation as follows:

Involvement

NIHR defines public involvement in research as research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. It is an active partnership between members of the public and researchers that influences and shapes research.

Here are examples of how members of the public might get involved in research as **contributors**:

- as joint grant holders or co-applicants on a research project
- identifying research priorities
- as members of a project advisory or steering group
- as community co-researchers

Engagement

This is activity where information and knowledge about research is provided and disseminated. Examples of engagement are:

- awareness of research through things like news media, websites, email bulletins and social media
- dissemination to research participants, colleagues or members of the public on the findings of a study.

Participation

This is when people take part in a research study as **participants**, for example completing a questionnaire or participating in a focus group as part of a research study.

These different activities – involvement, engagement and participation – are often linked and, although they are distinct, they can complement each other.

For more information, see: Briefing notes for researchers - public involvement in NHS, health and social care research | NIHR

Payment rates

If you are asking members of the public and community to take part in research, you should think about how you are going to compensate them for their time. There are lots of different views around the levels of compensation that are appropriate, and this will also depend on the context you are working in.

The National Institute for Health and Care Research has created guidelines on how much to pay community members for taking part in research projects.

However, it is important to recognise that:

- The rate of payment that you make is at your discretion, and there may be rates suggested by your organisation or institution.
- The amounts that public contributors are paid for involvement varies widely, depending on activity and organisational finances/budget constraints.

Specific NIHR guidance is available on employment and tax considerations: Payment for public involvement in health and care research: a guide for organisations on employment status and tax | NIHR

Resourcing public and community involvement in research governance

This checklist is designed to be an interactive document that you can use to build up your budget to support involvement from public and contributors in strategic and research governance activities across your whole local authority.

See 'Further Resources' for additional tools, including more in-depth costing spreadsheets.

Items you may need to budget for:	Things to consider	Included?		Notes
		Yes	No	
Salary for a coordinator or facilitator plus overheads.	It is important to cost staff time for supporting and coordinating public contributor involvement. This should include time to organise meetings, agendas and minutes as well as time to support contributors through induction and one-to-one sessions. If you are working with a voluntary and community sector partner to facilitate involvement, you will also need to consider whether they have any staff costs that would need to be covered. The amount of staff time allocated to public contributor involvement can vary considerably. Depending on the amount of activity taking place, this can be a full-time or part-time role. At a minimum, you will need at least half a day a week of dedicated time to facilitate involvement from public contributors. Because strong relationships are essential to successful			

	involvement, you will need to ensure you have allowed enough time to build these.			
Recruitment costs	We recommend thinking through any costs that may be associated with recruitment of public or community contributors. In addition to promotional costs, you may also wish to consider paying travel expenses for individuals to attend an interview or an informal chat about the role. If you are asking voluntary and community organisations to support recruitment in any capacity, we recommend that you also consider any costs they may incur and how these can be covered. Recruitment costs may vary depending on the groups of individuals you wish to engage with (for example, you may need to translate materials and undertake different outreach activities to engage with a diverse group of potential contributors).			
Payment for core induction sessions	You may wish to have group and individual induction sessions to cover introductions to topics such as research on wider determinants of health, your local authority, data protection and the role of public contributors. For these, you will need to consider how many hours of induction each contributor will need in total and calculate this by the hourly rate to be paid.			

Payment for individual catch up/reflection meetings	Public contributors can benefit from individual meetings every 4-6 months to check in on how they are finding the role and whether there is any additional support needed. For each contributor, we suggest allowing 2-4 hours a year, paid at an hourly rate.			
Payment for regular governance meetings	If your contributors are part of a regular Public Advisory Group, you will need to calculate the time contributors will be providing over the year, for example 4 meetings with 5 contributors = 20 hours at the hourly rate agreed.			
Time to review papers before meetings/ respond to emails	If public contributors need to review documents or respond to emails ahead of meetings, you will need to decide if this is paid in addition to the time spent in meetings. Sometimes preparation time is included in the hourly rate paid for a meeting/workshop.			
Time for specific tasks e.g. Reviewing a plain English summary of a research project	It may be that your contributors are supporting with specific tasks such as reviewing plain English summaries of ongoing or completed research projects. You will need to identify and think through specific tasks as well as the level of involvement you are looking to support. For example, will contributors review a written research application or co-design a complete research project from inception to evaluation? As a guide, you may wish to allocate the following time for review activities:			

	• Plain English summary review – 1-2 hours. • A short funding application form review - 1-3 hours for review and feedback.			
Equipment costs (e.g. local authority laptop)	You will need to include costs for any equipment public contributors will need to be able to fulfil their role, for example a laptop if required. You may also need to look at logistics around setting up local authority email accounts for public contributors and any mandatory training (IT User and Data Protection) for individuals using the local authority network.			
Events	You may wish for your public contributors to attend other events locally or nationally. If so, you will need to consider the time that will need to be covered as part of this as well as any other logistical costs.			
Meeting rooms	You may need to allocate an amount in the budget for meeting room hire for regular governance meetings or individual sessions.			
Materials, stationery, printing costs	We recommend including the costs of printing materials for meetings and stationery to support the work of public contributors (accessibility arrangements have their own section below).			
Travel expenses	You will need to consider whether public contributors will			

	need to travel to meetings or conferences and budget accordingly.			
Food and refreshments for meetings	If meetings are face to face, we highly recommend providing refreshments at all meetings.			
Training costs (e.g. access to external training or conferences)	Some public contributors may need to access training provided by an external facilitator. We recommend assessing whether this training is essential for a public contributor to fulfil their role, or for wider personal development (in which case you may only offer the training itself and not pay for time to attend).			
Resources to support access needs of different public contributors, to ensure they can contribute fully.	You may wish to budget for individual items to ensure all contributors can participate fully in activities, this could include, translation of materials, BSL interpreters, big print versions or fidget toys for those who find these helpful to aid concentration for example. This could also involve covering childcare costs, and or support from carers or personal assistants.			

Further resources:

Budgeting for involvement: cost calculator - Learning for Involvement
PPIE planning tool for researchers - Learning for Involvement
Inclusive research funding application guidance | NIHR
Different experiences: A framework for considering who might be involved in research | NIHR
Public Co-Applicants in Research - NIHR guidance