



“Working Together”

Document for public contributors and patient and public involvement advisers and other staff working within the Research Design Service (RDS)

This “Working Together” document sets out guidelines for how people from different backgrounds, experiences or organisations can come together and work effectively on joint projects.

When we involve members of the public within an organisation such as the RDS, the members of the public are not (usually) employed by that organisation but are volunteers. This means they are not bound by the rules and regulations that apply to members of paid staff. The Working Together document is an informal agreement that both staff and public contributors agree to. It sets out guidelines for appropriate behaviour that will support people to work together productively. It also indicates some boundaries. If these are overstepped, the Working Together document can help guide conversations towards better relationships. It is important that the content of this document is discussed with all involved before involvement activities start.

The [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#) have been embedded within the statements below.

Acknowledgements

The origins of the document lie in a version co-produced by Julie Hedayioglu and public contributors from RDS South East. This version was developed by Jo Welsman and Helen Burchmore (RDS South West) with public contributors Eileen Tipper, Robin Humphreys, Gail Thornton and Monica Jefford. Additional reviews and comments were provided by Steven Blackburn (RDS West Midlands), Louise Ward, and Annie Hawton (RDS South West)

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The Research Design Service values the involvement of public contributors throughout its work, which includes:

- the design and review of health and social care research,
- the support and development of researchers wishing to follow a career in research,
- the management of the organisation (e.g. Senior Management Team).

We propose the following as a set of core values and behaviours that will help create a working space where all types of experience and expertise (lived, life, academic, clinical) are equally valued.

For public contributors and RDS staff

We will:

1. Come to public involvement events and activities prepared and ready to take part.
2. Keep confidential any details of the research project we are involved in.
3. Not discuss or disclose any sensitive or private information about other people.
4. Keep comments and contributions relevant and to the point.
5. Listen to other points of view without interrupting and respect opinions that may be different to our own.
6. Encourage friendly and helpful discussion and support others to speak.
7. Be tolerant, considerate and include individuals, communities or cultural groups with understanding and without judgement.
8. Provide detailed and helpful feedback on public involvement activities.
9. Keep emails, phone calls or other forms of communication to each other polite and relevant to public involvement activities.
10. Respect the working hours and/or availability of others.
11. Be clear and honest about expenses and payments.

For RDS staff only

In addition, staff members/PPI Lead will:

12. Provide you, in good time, with any information you need to support your involvement.
13. Do their best to respond to individual needs around communication and information sharing (e.g. large print, hard copies, colour schemes for slides, hearing loops etc.)
14. Do their best to accommodate individual accessibility needs.
15. Give you the name and contact details of the person who will be responsible for your involvement activities and let you know when they are available.
16. Try to answer any emails/phone calls from you within [insert a reasonable number of days here] working days.
17. Offer you support and training to develop your skills as public contributors.
18. Support you with claiming payments and expenses.
19. Include you in any discussions or decisions about the involvement activities you will be doing.
20. Recognise that you are free to stop taking part in PPI activities at any time and without giving an explanation.
21. Provide you with the name and contact details of someone you can contact if you feel you have been treated unfairly or inappropriately by the staff you work with.