

RDS Public Involvement Strategy (approved) 26 April 2016

The RDS mission for Public Involvement is to promote active and meaningful Public Involvement in research that it supports. The RDS believes that strong public involvement strengthens both the quality and relevance of health research.

The current RDS Public Involvement strategy is based upon objectives that were agreed by all RDSs in 2013. Since this time there have been some fundamental changes to the Public Involvement landscape in general and some that are specific to the RDS. These include:

- A growth in the size and importance of public involvement in NIHR research. There are now estimated to be upward of 200 people in Public Involvement posts working for NIHR (DH 2015). There are over 30 in the RDS.
- A national strategic review of Public Involvement in NIHR leading to the 'Going the Extra Mile' (GtEM) report. This provides clear strategic goals and a set of recommendations for the development of PI in NIHR over the next 10 years.
- The partnership between the RDS and Wessex Institute which was successful in obtaining the contract to run the INVOLVE Co-ordinating Centre from 2016/2020.

It is therefore timely to review the RDS Public Involvement strategy to ensure that it is fit for purpose in the current context.

RDSSG has approved the following strategic objectives:

- Promote effective ways of encouraging and supporting RDS clients to work with members of the public in research design choices so that public involvement is embedded throughout the project, eg. Relevance of topic; Selection of suitable outcome measures; Feasibility; Development of study materials; Dissemination of results.
[Links to the GtEM strategic goal that by 2025 the experience of patients, service users and carers is a fundamental and valued source of knowledge].
- Support an increasingly diverse and empowered PI community and provide them with appropriate support (eg. training) and encouragement to participate as valued partners in RDS infrastructure and supporting RDS clients. RDS clients will also be encouraged to engage with a diverse community on their projects.
[Links to GtEM Recommendation 10 – Community and Recommendation 6 – Co-production].

- Continually review existing PI structures and networks in place regionally to increase the opportunities for patients and the public to support the aims of the RDS in promoting high quality and relevant applied health research. This may include co-ordinating mechanisms to provide public feedback on research proposals, outreach events to engage the public etc.
[Links to GtEM Recommendation 1 – Communication and Information]
- Work with INVOLVE and members of the public to inform, promote and encourage INVOLVE's Values and Principles Framework regionally.
[Links to GtEM Recommendation 2 – Culture]
- Ensure that through its partnership with INVOLVE, the RDS will act as a communication link. INVOLVE will work alongside the RDS to establish links with national and regional fora to ensure that national PI work is widely disseminated and that regional activity is routinely reported to INVOLVE.
[Links to the RDS role in the INVOLVE partnership model]
- Provide leadership or support to promote local PI partnerships, eg. Through establishing and/or taking part in promoting and supporting regional PI communities to develop PI locally in a way that is aligned with NIHR's goals.
[Links to the RDS role in the INVOLVE partnership model and to GtEM strategic goal that public involvement is locally driven and relevant whilst strategically consistent with the NIHR's goals and to GtEM Recommendation 7 – Connectivity]
- Provide support and development to RDS PI staff to ensure they can work effectively to promote strong public involvement in research applications.
[Links to GtEM Recommendation 4 – Continuous improvement]
- Continue to demonstrate impact of PI in the work of the RDS by setting milestones and measuring success along the three indices identified in the GtEM report. These are reach, relevance and refinement and the RDS PI Community will need to work out how to operationalise these in a way that is meaningful to the RDS.
[Links to GtEM Recommendation 5 – Continuous improvement]

Reference

Department of Health. *Going the extra mile: Improving the nation's health and wellbeing through public involvement in research.* 2015.

www.nihr.ac.uk/patients-and-public/documents/Going-the-Extra-Mile.pdf