

Public involvement in research

Many people may not realise that you can get involved in research but what does “involve” actually mean? The Health Research Authority state that, “Public involvement in research is where research is done ‘with’ or ‘by’ patients and the public rather than ‘to’, ‘for’ or ‘about’ them.”

Public involvement is not about taking part in research as a research participant or as a research subject – this is called public participation which is very different. If you get involved in research it means that you could help ensure that the right questions are being asked.

What exactly does public involvement include?

Public involvement includes things like:

- working with research funders to prioritise research
- offering advice as members of a project steering group
- commenting on and developing research materials such as research questions and surveys
- undertaking interviews with research participants

Who can get involved?

Anyone who has used, is using or is likely to use health and social care services, as well as people from organisations that represent people who use services, can get involved in research.

Why should I get involved?

There is a world of difference between the perspectives of people who have a professional role in health and social care services i.e. doctors and researchers etc. and the perspectives of current, former or potential users of health and social care services.

For instance, patients will possibly be better able to identify which research is more important for them at that time. Also, the public can make suggestions on how to recruit patients as participants i.e. suggest including paying taxi fares for elderly patients who find travelling on buses difficult.

If you are interested in getting involved in research you can find out more about it from the websites below:

Health Research Authority

<https://www.hra.nhs.uk/about-us/what-we-do/taking-part-or-getting-involved-research/>

Involve

<https://www.invo.org.uk/find-out-more/what-is-public-involvement-in-research-2/>

May Griffiths: A Carer’s Journey of Involvement in Research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYwIq2fq-EU&feature=youtu.be>

