**Involving the Public in our Research**

Patients and the public are at the heart of our vision to improve the health and well-being of people across Wessex[[1]](#endnote-1). The knowledge, experiences and support of patients and the public are essential to ensure that our research goals and solutions are relevant, prevent waste, and bring the greatest possible benefits to society.

We use the terms involvement[[2]](#endnote-2) and engagement[[3]](#endnote-3) to describe activities that aim to prioritise the public voice in our health and social care research. We aim to deliver high quality public involvement and engagement for health and social care.

This document summarises our ambitions and gives a few examples of activities we will deliver in our first year (April 2021-March 2022).

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| **We listen to voices relevant to our research priorities that reflect the diversity of the local population – ensuring the underserved[[4]](#endnote-4) have a voice.** This year we will:* Work with the leads of each project starting in 2021 to identify who is underserved in the context of each project. We will prioritise the voices of these underserved groups in our involvement activities.
* Publish guidance documents on how to improve virtual meeting accessibility.
 | **Inclusive Opportunities** |
| **We have a culture that respects different perspectives, values contributions and supports mutually respectful and productive relationships.**This year we will:* Work with our public members to develop and trial approaches to blending face-to-face and virtual activities as we adapt to changing social distancing restrictions.
* Develop induction materials that outline the support structures available in ARC Wessex for involvement and engagement activities.
 | **Working Together** |
| **We capture, monitor and share our learnings.** This year we will:* Adapt an involvement impact tool so we can use it to monitor the impact of our activities.
 | **Impact** |
| **We provide health research communities of Wessex (including public) adequate PPI/E training, support and learning opportunities.** This year we will:* Develop a course supporting the public with their confidence contributing to virtual meetings.
* Evaluate a pilot mentorship scheme, where we paired new PhD students with a public partner to provide mentorship in involvement and engagement.
* Deliver a training course focused on skills for public involvement to our researchers.
 | **Support and Learning** |
| **We use** **innovative approaches and good communication to stimulate knowledge-of, and interest-in, our research.**This year we will:* Collect a baseline measurement (ie starting position) of how well feedback processes are embedded in our involvement and engagement activities. This will include understanding how regularly public members are told what difference their contributions have made to research.
 | **Communications** |
| **We involve the public at strategic and operational levels.**This year we will:* Involve the public in decisions about which projects we will fund this year.
* Collect feedback from our public members who have strategic positions to understand if they feel heard and included in decision-making.
 | **Governance** |

Want to know more? You can read our [full strategy](https://6fe13210-edbb-4d7c-99ba-b393e103e25c.usrfiles.com/ugd/6fe132_f5a5a0b47ed14eaba0556c90a74c0985.pdf).

Have questions or comments? Email ppiesupport@uhs.nhs.uk

1. Wessex includes Dorset, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and South Wiltshire. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Public involvement activities describe activities where research is carried out ‘with’ or ‘by’ members of the public rather than ‘to’, ‘about’ or ‘for’ them. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Engagement activities describe activities where information and knowledge about research is provided to and shared with the public. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Underserved is the term we have chosen to use to describe people who are less well included in research. It is important to recognise that underserved groups are context-specific. There is no single, simple definition to describe all underserved groups. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)