

Developing a new 1-1 support scheme for public involvement in People in Health West of England

Background

Embedding public involvement in research and service improvement in health and social care is an ongoing challenge for all of us. There can be a gap between hopes and ambitions for involvement and the realities of doing the work with limited time and resources. At the same time the public involvement community continues to grow and more people are taking on involvement roles. Sometimes doing this work can feel quite isolated and there may be limited opportunities for personalised learning and development, even though we know such opportunities are important to develop skills and confidence.

In the People in Health West of England (PHWE) involvement network we are lucky to have colleagues to work with and provide mutual support. To increase the availability of support we are developing and piloting a new 1-1 support scheme for the West of England.

What will be on offer?

People will be able to seek one to one support if they are a member of the public with an involvement role (a public contributor), or a researcher or staff member organising and supporting public involvement activities. Our aim is to provide free, short-term, one to one support, based on mentoring principles, from someone with appropriate involvement experience.

Staff from our PHWE involvement team and an experienced public contributor – Andy Gibson, Martin Gregg and Rosie Davies - are working together to develop and offer this support scheme. The aim is to provide supportive contact to help people to reflect, identify their own needs and actions, and develop confidence.

We envisage that this service might help in a number of ways including:

- Preparing for a new involvement role
- Reflecting on current involvement work
- Exploring how to be more effective
- Finding personal solutions to involvement challenges
- Identifying colleagues, information or resources that might help.

The supporters will:

- Make an agreement with those seeking support about the focus and time frame for working together
- Give space to talk about identified involvement issues
- Signpost to other relevant resources.

The current supporters (Andy, Martin and Rosie) have experience of working in public involvement and providing support in related situations. They do not have expertise on all issues but can seek additional information and resources as needed. Our support service is based on the principles of mentoring and involvement experience, but none of the supporters are qualified professional mentors.

We have been piloting the service since late 2017. We will review the pilot process with the people we have supported in the summer of 2018, and hope to be ready to offer the service more widely from September 2018.

More information:

If you would like more information about our new 1-1 support scheme you can contact Rosie Davies email: Rosemary3.Davies@uwe.ac.uk.