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**NIHR CLAHRC for the North West Coast  
Public Engagement Policy  
Version 3 17<sup>th</sup> February  
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### **1. Introduction**

This document sets out our policy for supporting engagement of the public in the work of the NIHR CLAHRC for the North West Coast (CLAHRC NWC). The term 'public' is used here to refer to a range of individuals including users of services, patients, carers and those sharing a particular interest, for example, people with disabilities or living in particular neighbourhoods. It also includes representatives from relevant patient groups, charities and/or voluntary organizations. Engagement refers to the many ways in which the public can contribute to our work including active involvement in: prioritizing our work, the design and conduct of our activities and the production and dissemination of outputs. The term 'public volunteers' is used to describe members of the public who collaborate in the work of the CLAHRC NWC. Engagement also covers publicizing and disseminating our work to the public and the process of recruiting them as participants in our studies.

### **2. Principles for Public Engagement**

The following principles underpin our approach to public engagement:

- Participation of the public will be promoted and encouraged in all aspects of our work and we will follow guidance on good practice produced by INVOLVE
- Processes for recruitment, support and communication with members of the public will be transparent and inclusive
- Public volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect. Their expertise will be recognised as an essential complement to professional expertise and research evidence
- Public engagement and involvement will make a real difference to our work. The experience and impacts of engagement and involvement will be evaluated and findings will be used to improve our structures and processes.
- Appropriate training and development opportunities will be offered to public volunteers and to staff and other Partners to ensure they have the skills and competencies necessary to engage effectively with the public

### **3. Structures and processes for public engagement**

A Public Engagement Facilitator, responsible to the Director of Engagement, will be appointed to develop and maintain systems and processes to engage the public in all aspects of our work. Public volunteers will have formal positions on the CLAHRC NWC Steering Board and Management Team. Additionally, the Theme management teams will recruit public volunteers or develop alternative

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ways of involving members of the public in the management of their programmes.

Public volunteers will also be recruited as collaborators in specific pieces of work including contributing to:

- The development of proposals for primary applied research, evidence synthesis and implementation projects, capacity building and knowledge exchange activities;
- Project advisory and/or steering groups
- Project information leaflets, research instruments, etc
- The collection, analysis and interpretation of data
- The production and dissemination of research outputs
- The conduct of implementation activities

We will also establish and support a cadre of *Public Engagement Champions* who will disseminate information about the CLAHRC NWC to the wider NW coast health community and help to recruit new public volunteers. Finally we will communicate with the public across the NW coast region by establishing an *Engage with CLAHRC NWC* network supported through our website and social media.

Strategic oversight of our public engagement policy will be the responsibility of a **Public Reference Panel (PRP)**, which will be supported by the Public Engagement Facilitator. Membership of the PRP will include the two 'lay' co-applicants on the CLAHRC NWC bid and public volunteers working across the CLAHRC NWC. Additional members may be recruited through existing networks and advertising across the CLAHRC NWC region. The remit of the PRP is likely to include:

- Monitoring our performance in delivering public engagement and supporting public volunteers into leadership roles within the CLAHRC NWC.
- Electing and supporting public volunteer members of the CLAHRC NWC Steering Board, Management Team and other strategic structures
- Advising on recruitment of members of the public to CLAHRC NWC activities including the production of role descriptions and guidance on good practice standards in public engagement.
- Advising on all aspects of the work of the CLAHRC NWC work including:
  - Applied research and implementation priorities and activities
  - Capacity building programme
  - Public engagement in theme management and the development of public forums within themes.
  - Communication and dissemination strategy

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- Identifying potential questions for evidence reviews, applied research or implementation activities
- Advising on the development and implementation of the CLAHRC NWC Public Engagement Champions programme.
- Contribute to capacity building activities aiming to support public and service user engagement.

Initially, the two 'lay' co-applicants will chair the PRP and represent the PRP on the CLAHRC NWC Steering Board and Management Team but once established the PRP will review and agree the remit and ways of working.

#### **4. Payment and rewards**

All reasonable expenses incurred by members of the public engaging in our work will be repaid. In addition public volunteers will be rewarded according to good practice guidelines.

*Expenses:* repayment of out of pocket expenses and fees for time spent participating in CLAHRC NWC work. Details of justifiable expenses will be set out in the guidance but will include travel at standard public transport rates or car mileage, refreshments and the costs of stand-in care to allow carers to participate in our work. Procedures will be developed to ensure that public volunteers are appropriately and promptly reimbursed for expenses incurred in CLAHRC activities. Where feasible, payment will be made in cash at the time of the activity on production of appropriate receipts.

*Financial rewards* Members of the public will also be offered fees for their contribution to our work based on INVOLVE guidelines. However, we recognise that some volunteers may not wish to receive financial rewards because of conflict with benefit claims and others may prefer to donate what is offered to a charity.

*In kind rewards* will recognise the contribution of public volunteers to CLAHRC NWC work through, for example, joint authorship of reports, conference presentations and journal articles. The full costs of attending conferences, as presenters of work will be covered.

The PE Facilitator will work with the Public Reference Panel in consultation with the Liverpool CCG and CLAHRC NWC Management Team to produce detailed guidance on expenses and fees. The guidance will also set out processes for ensuring that access to rewards is equitable. Costs of public engagement will be included in budgets for specific activities but to ensure that public volunteers

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are able to participate in the development of proposals for specific pieces of work we will establish a general public engagement budget.

### **5. Training and development for public engagement**

Ensuring appropriate training and development opportunities for members of the public involved in CLAHRC NWC activities will be the responsibilities of the Public Engagement Facilitator and the Director of CPD. Initially public volunteers are likely to have some experience of contributing to health research but as new people are recruited it will be important to make available training opportunities. We will therefore:

1. Undertake an audit of training and development needs of public volunteers involved in CLAHRC NWC activities;
2. Identify existing courses/development activities provided elsewhere that meet these training and development needs
3. Develop, if necessary, bespoke training and development opportunities where existing provision can't be identified.

Specialised training may also be needed for specific pieces of work and any costs involved will be included in funding applications. Other development opportunities may be funded through the Public Engagement Budget where appropriate. The Public Reference Panel will develop guidelines on access to training and development opportunities with the support of the Public Engagement Facilitator.

The PE Facilitator will also work with the Director of CPD to develop appropriate training and development opportunities, including identifying training and resources provided by others, to ensure that staff employed by CLAHRC or our Partner organisations have the skills and competencies required to engage effectively with members of the public.

Working with the Public Reference Panel and drawing on resources from the MRC funded PiiAF study group led by Popay, the PE Facilitator will produce standards of good practice in engagement to be used across the CLAHRC NWC.

### **6. Communication**

Some members of the public participating in CLAHRC NWC activities or interested in doing so will have access to e-mail and social media but others will not. A diverse range of communication approaches will therefore be required to inform the public across the NW coast about CLAHRC NWC activities and invite participation/involvement in our work. The PE Facilitator will work to ensure that the CLAHRC NWC communications policy addresses these issues appropriately. Our cadre of Public Engagement Champions described briefly above will also

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help to ensure that the work of the CLAHRC NWC is communicated in different ways to diverse groups across the coastal area.

**7. Monitoring the impact of public engagement**

It is important to evaluate the impact of public engagement and involvement on the CLAHRC NWC and on the people involved including the public. The PE Facilitator working with the Public Reference Panel and supported by the Director of Engagement will develop an impact assessment plan. We will explore the potential for doing this in collaboration with other CLAHRCs.

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**Appendix 1: The Public Engagement Facilitator role and person specification**

***Role of the Public Engagement Co-ordinator***

*Need to clarify the terms and conditions of this appointment. Hours, salary, employing authority, location, fixed term or open contract, secondment, etc., etc.)*

The PE Facilitator will work with the Director of Engagement (DoE) and the Public Reference Panel (PRP) to implement and evaluate the public engagement policy. This will include:

- Governance and good practice:
  - To work with the DoE and PRP to:
    - Produce role descriptions for members of the public engaged with formal governance structures of CLAHRC NWC
    - Produce guidance on good practice in public engagement based on INVOLVE's work for use across the CLAHRC NWC
    - Establish a sound system for payment of expenses and fees to members of the public participating in the work of the CLAHRC NWC.
- Communication:
  - To work with the CLAHRC NWC Communications Manager lead to:
    - Raise awareness of the CLAHRC in the NW Coast area and opportunities for public involvement
    - Develop and maintain effective partnerships with other organisations with similar aims in the region and beyond
    - Decide how best to collate information on members of the public interested in engaging with the CLAHRC NWC in various ways.
    - Establish effective means of communicating with all members of the public actively engaged in CLAHRC NWC and the wider public in the NW coast region.
    - Establish a cadre of Public Engagement Champions and with them develop a programme of work
- Capacity building for engagement:
  - To work with the CLAHRC NWC Director of CPD to
    - Identify the training and development needs associated with public engagement for 'lay' experts, staff and others involved in the CLAHRC NWC

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- To produce and implement a plan to meet these needs.
- Evaluation:
  - To work with the DoE and PRP to
    - Produce a plan for assessing the impact of public engagement in the work of the CLAHRC NWC to be agreed with the CLAHRC NWC Management Team and Steering Board.
    - To oversee the implementation of the impact assessment plan.

***Person specification***

<u>Item</u>	<u>Essential/ Desirable</u>
<b>1. Knowledge and Experience</b>	
Understanding of and sympathy with the principles of public engagement in research in the health field or related sphere	E
Experience of health or social care research as researcher, manager, commissioner, lay contributor	E
Experience of working with lay volunteers in a research environment	E
Understanding of the necessity for research to drive change in the NHS/Social Care Services and improve patient care and public health	E
<b>2. Interpersonal Skills and Attributes</b>	
Able to communicate effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds	E

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Able to relate to and anticipate the difficulties of people with long term conditions who may be pcp volunteers E

Able to work effectively as part of a team E

**3. Other Requirements**

Excellent communication skills, verbal and Written and good IT skills E

Able to travel in the North West E

Driving Licence E

Ability to work flexibly E