Patient and Public Involvement
A Strategy for the Sheffield NIHR Clinical Research Facility

2014-2017

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Context

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Sheffield Clinical Research Facility (CRF) operates from both the Royal Hallamshire Hospital and the Northern General Hospital within Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. It is a partnership between the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and University of Sheffield. It offers purpose built, state-of-the-art, dedicated research facilities, which provide a specialist environment for the conduct of high quality clinical research. The CRF is funded in partnership with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and the University of Sheffield.

The NIHR has already set up a partnership with the public, researchers and others to achieve a vision to advance NHS public health and social care research and improve the health and well-being of the population. This partnership is called INVOLVE and, through consultation with its members, it has a published strategy for putting people first in research. This strategy is in place until 2015 and can be accessed here. The Involve website which explains more about its work can be accessed here. The strategy defines involvement in research as being carried out ‘with’ or ‘by’ members of the public and not ‘to’, ‘about’, or ‘for’ them. This includes prioritization of research, design of research and conduct of research. INVOLVE will work to

- maximize the opportunity for public involvement,
- learn and share knowledge and experience of involvement
- support inclusion, diversity and equity, actively supporting involvement of groups who are often excluded
- make its work accessible
- strengthen and build upon existing work by INVOLVE and others

INVOLVE recognizes that there is an important distinction between the perspectives of the public and the perspectives of people who have a professional role in health and social care services.

On 20 May 2014 the NIHR published a strategic 5 year plan called Promoting a Research Active Nation to encourage public engagement and participation in health, social care and public health research. The plan sets out a range of initiatives including the NIHR ‘Ok to ask’ campaign, which aims to grow the number of people taking part in research by making sure that

- there are more opportunities to take part in research
- that people can access better information and tools such as the UK Clinical Trials Gateway to find out about studies relevant to them
- that their experience of taking in research is a positive one

The NIHR strives to want to support willing patients to become active in research, and willing patient populations to become research active communities.
The University of Sheffield wishes to reassert some of the fundamental values of the University of Sheffield as a Civic University, founded for and by the people of its city, whose research priorities should reflect widely shared societal goals. The development of a widely understood identity for the University of Sheffield as a research-led University with a powerful culture of civic engagement has been identified by the University’s Executive as one of its main priorities for the coming five years. The ambition is to effect cultural change in the University so there is a widespread expectation that staff at all levels can contribute to public engagement to have real influence on the strategic direction of the University.

The NHS Constitution states that: ‘The NHS commits to inform you of research studies in which you may be eligible to participate.’ ‘The NHS works at the limits of science’. ‘The NHS aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism through its commitment to innovation and to the promotion, conduct and use of research to improve the current and future health and care of the population’. The CRF is keen to facilitate access to its research to support the commitment of the constitution.

The CRF is supported in its PPI activities by the Sheffield Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust and the University of Sheffield Joint Office (the Clinical Research Office, or CRO). The CRO is committed to involving and engaging patients and members of the public in a variety of ways by working in partnership with other groups and networks to maximise opportunities, learn and share knowledge and examples of best practice and support inclusion of PPI in research. It aims to embed PPI within the research of all directorates by the creation of patient panels, focus groups and events and support those panels already in existence. This will build Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trusts capacity and capability to support PPI in every stage of the research process.

The CRF PPI strategy is embedded within the CRF and is aligned with the Involvement strategies of INVOLVE and the principles embraced by University of Sheffield and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. It describes how public involvement, engagement and participation in research apply specifically to the Sheffield NIHR CRF.

The strategy recognizes the distinction made between members of the public and those who have a professional role in the service offered by the CRF. It includes plans to involve those with a professional interest in research supported by the CRF.

The strategy describes:

- Our vision for PPI – what we aspire to
- Our Mission - our approach to PPI and how we plan to implement it until 2017
- Our Strategy – what we will do to achieve our vision.

**Vision - what we aspire to**

Be the provider of excellent service which is relevant to the lives of CRF users and patients and the public who are interested in learning about or shaping our service to ensure it is fit for purpose both now and in the future.
Mission - how we will approach PPI

We will engage and involve patients, the public and our STH colleagues in the experience of the CRF, where this has the potential to improve the service we offer and improve access for patients to CRF research.

Strategy - what we will do to achieve our vision

To achieve our vision we will first recognize the following:

- **There is already much PPI occurring**
  
  It is important that the ongoing PPI work is recognized and badged appropriately. PPI is everyone’s business in the CRF and feedback from everyone is vital to measure the success of our PPI effort.

- **The PPI Plan should be implemented realistically**
  
  Though there is a temptation to try to do everything, this is unrealistic and there must be a focus on what activities will add value to the CRF and its service users.

- **PPI Activity should add value**
  
  Activity should be prioritised and targeted to reflect what adds the most value to both. The focus of activities will change as areas for focus are identified. Activities should not be over complicated.

- **Our PPI effort should be in collaboration with others**
  
  Our PPI effort should be aligned with and part of a wider effort supported by the University, the CRO and local/national organisations for PPI and the NIHR infrastructure. A PPI role could theoretically be funded by multiple stakeholders if there is overlap.

- **Collaboration need not be ongoing/permanent with the same group**
  
  Where patients or members of the public are involved in developing our service we should not be afraid to decide that the collaboration has ended and is no longer required. All parties should agree that the objectives have been met and that no other objectives have arisen from the project before closing it. We should not feel that we have to continue to engage patients/members of the public indefinitely as long as we have been clear about what we hoped to achieve by collaborating. We should refresh those we collaborate with as appropriate.
We should measure the success of PPI as far as we can

Wherever possible we should determine if our activity is adding value to the CRF and/or its users. We should gather information in the most effective way to be able to demonstrate added value and we should feedback the collated feedback to those who have provided it where appropriate. Case studies will be used to qualitatively highlight instances where PPI has been of particular value to, or had specific impact on CRF activity.

We will focus on the following objectives...

- provide a high quality experience for patients and the public using the CRF service
- promote the work of the CRF to patients and the general public
- Raise awareness of the work of the CRF

Objective 1 - Provide a high quality experience for research participants using the CRF service

We will collect feedback from users of the CRF service. We will use the information and identify areas for improvement within the CRF. We will address areas where our service is reported to be less than excellent and strive to improve wherever we can.

We will continue to make it as easy as possible for patients and the public to access information about how to be engaged or involved with our work or participate in further research.

Objective 2 – Raise awareness of the work of the CRF

We will engage with patients, our clinical colleagues and the general public in a way best suited to their needs to educate them about the research that the CRF is doing and the impact that this research is having on progress in healthcare.

Objective 3 – Build capacity and capability for PPI working with local and national networks

We will build and strengthen our partnerships locally and nationally to shape local and national PPI policies. This will allow us to monitor our progress and learn from each other, re-prioritising where we need to.
Monitoring Progress

Success of our PPI activity is clearly extremely important, but how do we know what success looks like and whether we are moving towards success?

We all need to be sure that the activities we are involved in to work achieve our objectives have added value.

To give us information about whether we have been successful in achieving our objectives, or to confirm that we are moving towards achieving them, we will measure progress towards the objectives of The Strategy.

For more information about how we plan to measure progress towards our objectives please refer to the CRF PPI Implementation Plan which gives more detail about the specific activities we are currently involved in which support each of the objectives. This document is available upon request by emailing CRFSheffield@sth.nhs.uk or telephoning the CRF Reception on 0114 2715779.