Engaging and Involving the Public of Wales in Health and Social Care Research

Today’s Research;
Tomorrow’s Care

January 2017
Overview

Health and Care Research Wales’ ambition is to create an environment where the public are central to health and social care research in Wales. This will put the citizen at the heart of creating new knowledge and putting new knowledge into practice. Creating such an environment can establish Wales as a centre of excellence for active and meaningful public involvement in research, setting the standards of how researchers and the public can work in partnership to influence and deliver research that matters to the people of Wales.

More than ever, there is a commitment and recognition of the importance and contribution that the public can make. The Minister for Health and Social Services has introduced the principles of prudent healthcare\(^1\) to ensure that public value is at the heart of the Welsh healthcare system. Underlying these principles is a commitment to support the establishment of a more equal relationship between patient and professionals. These relationships are remodelled on the basis of co-production; citizens, communities and professionals pooling their expertise together, enabling the public to contribute as equal partners to decisions about public service commissioning, design, delivery and evaluation.

The principles of co-production extend to health and social care research in Wales, where the public are given the opportunities to be involved in and have a say on how health and social care research is prioritised, funded, developed, designed and delivered. Co-production of health and social care research ensures the public of Wales are equal partners with researchers in the creation of new knowledge and truly have a voice in health and social care research activity.

Accordingly, it is our vision to create a culture whereby all health and social care research that takes place in Wales happens ‘with the public, for the public’.

We are working in partnership with colleagues from throughout the UK to develop a set of standards to support public involvement to happen in line with the principles.

In 2017 a consultation will take place to ensure the standards support the everyday business of public involvement in research organisations, research projects and from individual perspectives.

The standards will provide a working tool to support quality, improvement and sharing.

Our Aims and Objectives

Our ambition is to:

- Embed a culture of familiarity with research within the public of Wales, where there is greater public awareness and understanding of research and its benefits
- Create an environment where the public feel empowered and enabled to become involved with, and take part in health and social care research
- Ensure the public of Wales have opportunities to engage with, be actively involved in and be participants of health and social care research
- Establish Wales as a centre of excellence for active and meaningful public involvement and engagement in research.

We will realise these ambitions through the coordination and development of a coherent, systematic and joined up approach for facilitating and promoting the Welsh population to become not only research aware, but directly and actively involved with research.
Core principles for public involvement

Embedded through all Health and Care Research Wales activity is our commitment to involving the public not only in our own work, but using our influence to champion the interests of the public in health and social care research in Wales more widely. Accordingly, all Health and Care Research Wales activity is underpinned by a set of core principles that shape our approach to public engagement and involvement.

We are committed to:

1. **High quality and meaningful** public involvement in both Health and Care Research Wales, and in health and social care research more widely;

2. Encouraging appropriate public involvement and engagement throughout the research process, from setting research priorities through to dissemination of research;

3. **Supporting** public involvement and engagement, ensuring researchers and the public access to the support necessary to enable them to involve and be involved;

4. Promoting **transparency** in relationships between the public and researchers as well as transparency in Health and Care Research Wales Public Delivery Board decision making;

5. Advocating **respect**, so researchers and the public show mutual respect for each other’s roles and perspectives and all parties are recognised and acknowledged for their contributions;

6. Encouraging **diversity** so involvement and engagement occurs with relevant groups with equal opportunity, and inclusivity;

7. Demonstrating **accountability**, of Health and Care Research Wales but also researchers to the communities and members of the public they involve and engage in their work.
The Health and Care Research Wales Public Delivery Board will use these principles to guide the strategic advice and direction it provides. It will also be the responsibility of all aspects of the Health and Care Research Wales funded infrastructure to ensure these principles are adhered to throughout their activities. Importantly, these principles can be operationalised in order to create a set of minimum standards, guidance and support for public involvement and engagement that will be available for the public and researchers through the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An evaluation framework will be established to review, monitor, evaluate and report all activity in line with these principles, with a strong focus on the impact of involvement. For transparency, the framework and subsequent progress and will be made publically available.

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