Briefing note five: Be accessible

Be accessible

Consider your plans for who you are going to involve and if they reflect the diversity of people or cultures in the research. It might be that you need to take further time to build relationships with organisations and individuals to make sure that you have the breadth of perspective needed for your project. It might also be necessary to make changes in order to support people to be fully involved:

- write clearly and simply using a friendly style and avoid jargon
- ask people how you can meet their specific accessibility needs, for example non-English speakers, people with visual or hearing impairments, learning difficulties or chronic long-term conditions
- make sure that members of the project team have equal access to resources and activities within the project – this might be meetings, support, equipment and library resources
- ensure fees and expenses are paid promptly so people are not left 'out-of-pocket' for long
- consider where you are going to hold meetings and whether the venue is accessible (see **briefing note eight**)
- do not assume that everyone has easy access to a computer or that they can print out long documents. Offer to post printed copies of information.
- allow for additional time for people to read information and paperwork.

> Partners needed access to terminology, steering group meetings, training in research, and funds (e.g. travel expenses). Communication challenges included the routine use of e-mail, conferences, and corridor meetings by professionals to discuss research, all of which could exclude partners. Professionals also e-mailed consultation documents at the last minute and expected rapid responses, whereas partners needed time to review unfamiliar material.

(**Hewlett et al 2006**)

Find out more about accessibility:

Strategies for diversity and inclusion in public involvement: Supplement to the briefing notes for researchers (INVOLVE, 2012)

NIHR 'make it clear' campaign

Social Care Institute for Excellence Guidelines for accessible events

Plain English campaign website