Issues to think about before you start – support

Make sure the person providing support has sufficient time and resources to fulfil this role. Ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to either manage different support needs or to refer people to other services.

Be clear about the boundaries to the support you will provide. You could provide this in a written statement so people are clear about the support they can expect.

Be proactive in offering support. It is better to provide more support than is needed and then reduce it, than to not offer any support until a crisis has occurred.

All kinds of people will have the skills and interest to get involved in research. It might seem that involvement won't suit some groups of people, for example those with aphasia, at the end of life, or people whose first language isn't English – but with the right approach, these individuals can make valuable contributions. It is important to match support and the type of involvement to individual needs, so that some of the perceived barriers to involving a wide range of people can be overcome. (See **Diversity supplement**)