

## **MindTech's public and patient involvement (PPI) strategy**

We draw from NIHR Involve and the McPin Foundation's definitions of public and patient involvement (PPI) in research, and see it as: where people with and without lived experience of mental health problems are actively involved in research projects and in our organisation, bringing a valuable perspective to – and influencing – our work.

### **Strategy**

Over the course of the MindTech HTC we have learned that the context of HTC research requires a responsive and multi-level approach to involvement. We have worked with our experienced involvement volunteers to co-produce an involvement strategy that will be co-lead by a patient and public representative and a researcher. Over the last four years we have learnt a lot about involvement and are moving forward with a co-produced approach.

#### PPI Co-leads:

A key feature of our co-produced arrangement is power sharing of leadership. We will have 2 PPI co-leads, one from a patient perspective and one from a researcher perspective; they are equal posts.

#### Involvement team:

We have established a group of involvement volunteers who are very experienced and knowledgeable about involvement. Here are some key elements of our approach:

- In elevating the standard of involvement at MindTech, we hope to raise the esteem in which the lived experience perspective is held.
- The remit for our involvement team is broad and advanced, which creates genuine responsibility and influence.
- The involvement team will work in both a responsive and proactive way – it is a two way process. The team will respond to the needs of MindTech, and will in turn expect MindTech to be responsive to the needs, views and perspectives of the team. This two way process involves responding as well as leading.

- The involvement team will have an oversight role in checking that all involvement activity meets required standards
- The team will have input into engagement and participation strategies.

Our strategy is implemented through:

- An Involvement Team: a team of experienced and responsive involvement volunteers who can become involved in projects of their choice, and meet regularly to discuss strategic and other non-project related issues.
- An Involvement Team Leader: an employed post (0.2FTE) held by an experienced PPI individual who will provide leadership on involvement (as co-lead)
- The Involvement Team Leader will be responsible for the Involvement Team's strategic development. They will co-lead on involvement overall, alongside and facilitated by a Research Fellow (0.2FTE); involvement will be co-led from both a patient and researcher perspective. A key feature of our strategy is sharing of leadership.
- The Involvement Team have input into an increasing range of areas within MindTech, and have a remit to identify how involvement can be optimised.

We aim to continue building upon our experience, and will share learning with other organisations (e.g. research, healthcare, and PPI organisations).

Our involvement aims:

- PPI is part of strategic discussions and all major decisions
- We have a multi-level approach to involvement:
  - a. strategic-level, e.g. inclusion of 2 PPI members (Involvement Team Lead plus team member) at steering, strategy and operational group meetings
  - b. theme-level, e.g. involvement team members attached to each theme
  - c. cross-project (i.e. overseeing)
  - d. individual project level
  - e. other activities, e.g. dissemination and engagement

- PPI is embedded into our research:
  - a. We will foster a culture where our involvement volunteers are ‘part of the team’, their contribution is valued, and its impact understood
  - b. For some projects we will move towards co-production, including service user researchers
- Involvement of people with lived experience of mental health problems is crucial to our work, though we welcome volunteers with and without lived experience recognising that a range of perspectives is valuable (e.g. family member, carer, friend)
- We will increase the number of PPI volunteers within the HTC and involve a diverse range of people.
  - a. We welcome volunteers with and without involvement expertise, and will offer peer mentoring so that more experienced volunteers can help those with less experience to develop.
  - b. For certain types of involvement (e.g. strategic level), we recognise that involvement expertise is essential.
- Volunteers have access to developmental training and information, so there is support to progress along a pathway of involvement opportunities e.g. towards strategic level involvement.
- We will work towards being recognised as a national leading organisation for involvement and will share learning and good practice with NIHR infrastructure and at high profile events, including the MindTech National Symposium.
- We will align our PPI infrastructure with that of the Nottingham BRC
- Our research is shaped by the priorities of the public e.g. our James Lind Alliance priority setting partnership (underway)

## Resources

We allocate **2%** of our budget to involvement activities (excluding staff costs). Staffing is provided to lead involvement (0.2FTE PPI representative and 0.2FTE Research Fellow). Both Co-Leads will be aligned with PPI in the Nottingham BRC, as will the MindTech Involvement Team; strong involvement frequently rests on the experience and understanding of researchers and volunteers, thus alignment with the BRC enables pooling of resources and sharing of learning.

We meet expenses and offer a participation fee for involvement activities, and have policies for these processes.

### **Criteria to evaluate effectiveness of our PPI strategy**

We will use a number of approaches to evaluate effectiveness against the main points in the strategy. We have conducted our first PPI-led evaluation of involvement (which fed into the 2014-15 annual report), and will continue to do this. Volunteers identify criteria for evaluation and these have informed our aims (e.g. that PPI contribution is valued and its impact is assessed and understood).

Proposed criteria include:

- PPI-led evaluation of involvement, against key aims of the strategy, and additional key areas identified by volunteers
- Logging recommendations made by volunteers (including whether implemented), at project and other levels (e.g. strategic) to chart implementation
  - Evaluating impact of involvement at project level (e.g. design, data collection, analysis)
- Provision (and take up) of training
- Record of attendance at organisation-level meetings
  - Ring-fenced time for volunteers to disseminate and discuss meeting content
- Setting key milestones towards co-production of research (e.g. provision of research training; PPI individuals conducting research, analysis)
- Record of research informed by James Lind Alliance priorities and sandpit events
- Tracking basic demographic info of volunteers to chart growth and diversity of involvement

Logging of recommendations (given by our involvement volunteers) will serve a number of purposes and is important in understanding how involvement is valued, and its impact. Logging should take place at project level and also strategic level, though it's important not to make this too burdensome.

Potential benefits include:

- Understanding the impact of involvement
- Understanding what recommendations are being implemented, which aren't, and why
- It can serve as proof of influence, and can also form part of the evaluation of involvement

Any evaluation criteria should aim to capture qualitative aspects of involvement, because these are important. Criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of our strategy will evolve over time according to the perceived success of proposed measures. We endeavour to capture what constitutes 'meaningful' involvement and will be guided by the views of our involvement volunteers in refinement of criteria.