



NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme

**NHS**

*National Institute for  
Health Research*

# Public involvement in the HTA programme



## Research in the NHS

Commissioning research that leads to direct benefits for patients has always been central to the National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment (NIHR HTA) programme.

The programme aims to ensure that high quality research information on the effectiveness, costs and broader impact of health technologies is produced in the most effective way for those who plan, provide or receive care in the NHS.

Health technologies can be defined as drugs, devices, procedures, health education, settings of care and screening programmes. They are all different ways of promoting health, preventing or treating disease, improving rehabilitation or providing long term care.

In January 2008, over 87,000 people were involved in HTA research as participants, and research suggests that of the studies funded by the HTA programme since 2002, 83 per cent of HTA investigators have

involved patients and members of the public in their projects in other ways. Members of the public are also involved in the HTA programme through helping to identify topics for research, sitting on advisory panels and commenting on research proposals.

HTA research findings directly influence key decision-making bodies such as the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), and the National Screening Committee (NSC), who rely on HTA outputs to raise standards of care.

The HTA programme has made progress in its work with members of the public in a number of ways, including: evaluating public involvement in the programme; developing guidance for researchers in planning public involvement in HTA research; and by working closely together with INVOLVE, the organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting active public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research.



## Get involved

The HTA programme defines public involvement as including:

- ▶ patients
- ▶ unpaid carers
- ▶ parents/guardians
- ▶ users of health services
- ▶ disabled people
- ▶ members of the public who are the potential recipients of health promotion/public health programmes
- ▶ groups asking for research because they believe they have been exposed to potentially harmful circumstances, products or services
- ▶ groups asking for research because they believe they have been denied products or services from which they believe they could have benefited
- ▶ organisations that represent service users and carers.

To ensure that patients are at the heart of everything it does, the HTA programme actively encourages those who use NHS services to become involved in its work. This can take the form of:

- ▶ **Identifying topics for research** - anyone can make a research suggestion, go to [www.hta.ac.uk/suggest](http://www.hta.ac.uk/suggest)
- ▶ **Prioritising research** - members of the public are invited to sit on HTA expert advisory panels
- ▶ **Commenting on research** - members of the public are invited to comment on briefing papers and research proposals
- ▶ **Being directly involved in research projects** - researchers are encouraged to involve members of the public in conducting research, visit [www.hta.ac.uk/ppiguideance](http://www.hta.ac.uk/ppiguideance)

**Support is available throughout the involvement process, including:**

- ▶ guidance and guidelines to help members of the public to maximise their input at each stage of the HTA process
- ▶ a pairing-up, or mentoring, scheme for new advisory panel members
- ▶ financial support.

Further information available on website [www.hta.ac.uk/public](http://www.hta.ac.uk/public)

## Research into public involvement

In 2007 the HTA programme published the results of the first study of public involvement in research management.

Commissioned to evaluate the HTA programme's efforts to involve the public in its work, the study has led to the development of a strategy which aims to fully integrate public involvement across the programme.

A free-standing executive summary of the study can be viewed at [www.hta.ac.uk/public/researchintoppi.shtml](http://www.hta.ac.uk/public/researchintoppi.shtml)

### Planning, Patient and Public Involvement in HTA

In order to recognise the increasing active involvement of patients, service users or the wider public in research, the HTA programme also offers guidance to research teams about patient and public involvement in health technology assessment.

Available as a resource on the HTA website, this guidance sets out the reasons for patient and public involvement, how to find people, how people can be involved, and principles for planning an involvement strategy. For further information, visit [www.hta.ac.uk/ppiguideance](http://www.hta.ac.uk/ppiguideance)

### Further information

More information about public involvement in the HTA programme can be found on the website, [www.hta.ac.uk/ppiguideance](http://www.hta.ac.uk/ppiguideance), or [www.hta.ac.uk/public](http://www.hta.ac.uk/public). For an informal discussion please contact our Public Involvement Lead tel: 023 8059 5618 or email: [htaid@soton.ac.uk](mailto:htaid@soton.ac.uk)



The HTA programme is part of the National Institute for Health Research. It is managed by the NIHR Coordinating Centre for Health Technology Assessment (NCCHA), part of the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC), based at the University of Southampton.

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