# **BRIEFING PAPER:** WCRC Public Involvement Rapid Response Group: Recruiting patients/public members to support research proposals with imminent funding deadlines.

Aim: To facilitate rapid recruitment of patient/public contributors (within three weeks) to support WCRC research proposals with imminent funding deadlines.

Objectives: To pilot over an 18- month period, the implementation of a public involvement in research Rapid Response Group and to measure its success. Feedback will be sought throughout the pilot for the purpose of refinement and a full evaluation will be conducted at the end of the 18 month period.

## Background:

Public involvement can enhance the quality, strengthen the relevance, responsiveness, and impact of research. Increasingly funders require public perspectives to influence studies throughout the research cycle, including as part of the initial funding bid. This could involve for example, the public contributor(s) reviewing proposals, reviewing patient documentation, writing lay summaries, attending meetings, and responding to questions put by Funding Bodies.

The [WCRC PPI Group](https://www.walescancerresearchcentre.org/public-and-patient-involvement/) has seven public members, supported by staff members, who provide advice on public involvement. However, the small group cannot realistically satisfy the many requests for public involvement at the proposal stage.

Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) have a Public Involvement Community of 400 people who receive weekly bulletins about public involvement opportunities. However, under normal circumstances, it can take several weeks to recruit a member of the public through this process, which can be a problem when funding deadlines are imminent. Additionally, prior to a study being funded, researchers may not have access to a budget to support payment of honoraria to public contributors.

To address this, the WCRC have worked with the HCRW Support Centre to develop and pilot a process to support rapid recruitment of patients/the public and optimise use of the HCRW ‘Enabling Involvement Fund’. The fund provides payment of honoraria to members of the public involved in research being prepared for submission to funding bodies. A group of public members, with a wide range of cancer experience, have also been recruited to specifically support public involvement at the proposal stage. This group can be alerted when an urgent request for public involvement is advertised and have undertaken to respond quickly.

### Established resources:

1. To ensure that as wide a group as possible has the opportunity to apply, every request will be circulated to the Public Involvement Community, a group of 400 people who receive weekly bulletins about public involvement and engagement. To ensure that researchers will get support they need, a group of people, the Rapid Response Group, have been recruited from the Public Involvement Community and they will be prepared to respond quickly and work to tight deadlines.
2. The ‘Enabling Involvement Fund’ can be used to pay honoraria to patients/members of the public involved in your research at pre-funding stage. Researchers can request support from the fund via a short form on the HCRW website: <https://healthandcareresearchwales.org/index.php/researchers-support-and-guidance-researchers-develop-research-idea/involving-public-your-research>

*NOTE: Where grant proposals follow a two-stage process, where success at stage one is followed by a short period before submission for stage two, the researcher can request to retain the services of the public contributor(s) should they be successful at stage one. This will facilitate the seamless rollover of HCRW financial support without the need to reapply.*

1. The HCRW Support Centre will handle the advertising, recruitment and payment.

### Recruitment process flowchart

Researcher fills in form on HCRW webpage [here](https://healthandcareresearchwales.org/form/request-for-public-involvement-s) to create advert with a short deadline requesting help through the Rapid Response Pathway. It is important that you state on the form in the section asking ‘How would you expect members of the public to contribute’ that you want to be considered for the Rapid Response pathway. You also need to consider a closing date for applications which allows you time to recruit and get input from your PPI. Usually 3 days from advertisement would be sufficient for Rapid Response members to respond

Researcher contacts the WCRC Hub office via [wcrc@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wcrc@cardiff.ac.uk) to inform them that urgent public involvement is required and a form via the HCRW website has been completed

WCRC informs members of the Rapid Response Group that an advert with a very short deadline will be placed in the near future

HCRW place an advert on their website and advertise via their bulletin

The WCRC Hub office notifies members of the Rapid Response Group that the opportunity has now been advertised with the deadline date for applications

HCRW sends EOIs to researcher

Researcher reviews applications and chooses one or two applicants with the most relevant experience for the study from applications submitted and notifies HCRW who supply contact details to researcher\*

Public members contact HCRW directly for payments. HCRW process payments in line with current [categories](https://healthandcareresearchwales.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Three_categories_of_involvement_A4_eng_0.pdf)

*\* increasing inclusivity: Whilst it is understandable that researchers may prefer to choose someone with previous public involvement experience for a proposal, we would ask them to consider taking on an inexperienced lay person together with an experienced person if two posts are available.*

If researchers want some fast lay input on a **shorter or one-off piece of work**, e.g. reviewing a patient information sheet or a lay summary, this can be provided through the existing Lay Faculty of the Systems Immunity Research Institute who are happy to undertake this work from researchers.

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/systems-immunity/engagement/lay-faculty>

I hope this explains how researchers can access help quickly through the new Rapid Response Group. If you have any questions, please contact me.

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