

**The National Institute of Health Research Health Protection Research Unit in  
HCAI and AMR at Imperial College  
Public and patient involvement and engagement strategy**

**Background:** The Health Protection Research Unit (HPRU) in Healthcare associated infections (HCAI) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) at Imperial College aims to establish a fully integrated, responsive and operational unit, capable of producing health protection research in HCAI and AMR of the highest quality and of the greatest potential impact. It further aims to translate this research into practice by developing a strong, comprehensive network of relevant expertise with the organisational resilience needed to respond to any emerging issue or public health incident related to HCAI and AMR.

In the pursuit of this vision the Unit also has a commitment to ensuring patient and public involvement and engagement in its work. The definitions we adopt are those of the NIHR, namely:

- **Involvement:** Where research is carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them.
- **Engagement:** Where information and knowledge about research is provided and disseminated.
- **Participation:** Where people take part in a research study

As part of the original application process, the HPRU was required to produce a two page strategy stating how it intended to engage patients and the public in the research it conducted.

With the last of our three patient representatives now recruited to our Scientific Advisory Board, it is timely to review this strategy in light of our experience over the last two years and revise it where appropriate to guide our activities over the forthcoming ones.

**Purpose:** The HPRU in HCAI and AMR agrees with the NIHR, that patients, carers and the public can bring particular knowledge and insights to research based on their personal experiences as users of health and social care services and treatments. Members of the public without experience of healthcare and other services can also offer a valuable perspective and the involvement of these groups in the design, execution and management of research can help to improve its quality, relevance and the wider dissemination of its results. Furthermore as our research is publicly funded, it is also important to raise awareness of the work we do. Wherever possible we should work to foster an environment where involvement, engagement and participation are encouraged and opportunities to develop these activities are undertaken wherever practical to do so.

**Aim:** Our aim is to ensure that there are opportunities for patients and the public to make valued contributions to our HPRU via involvement and engagement at all levels; from the strategic Scientific-Advisory Board level, down to individual project level. Although it is evident that some research themes within the HPRU lend themselves more readily to patient involvement at project level than others, we will

nevertheless aim to ensure all themes consider the viability of public contribution in at least one on-going project. All themes are expected to contribute to public and patient engagement activities.

**Leadership:** The overall responsibility for delivering the PPI/E strategy rests with the Director of the HPRU in HCAI and AMR at Imperial, Professor Alison Holmes. Individual theme leads are responsible for ensuring that their staff commit to and support the strategy, participating in public and patient focused activities. Theme leads are responsible for identifying suitable individual research projects for patient and public involvement and appropriate ways in which patients and the public can contribute to that research. Theme leads are also responsible for considering how best to ensure the effective public communication of research results and outputs.

**Resources:** The HPRU has a central administrative team consisting of a Head of Operations and part-time administrative assistant, who undertake the day-to-day activities needed to deliver the strategy, including taking a central role in planning and co-ordinating any engagement activities. They are also the first port of call for our patient/service user representatives or any members of the public wishing to become involved with our research.

The Unit also has a dedicated budget in order to meet the costs of patient and public involvement at a strategic level. External funding has been sought for specific engagement activities and opportunities to resource our PPI/E agenda further will continue to be sought.

**Management and Governance:** To ensure progress in delivering our strategy, patient and public engagement and involvement will be a standing item on the HPRU's Strategy, Management and Operations Committee. This Committee meets quarterly and is attended by the HPRU Director, PHE Lead and the theme leads from both the College and Public Health England. Beyond this, the HPRU Scientific Advisory Board will include 3 patient/public representatives who will review the Unit's overall direction and progress. In addition the HPRU will be required annually to report all progress, including its progress in delivering its PPI/E Strategy, to its funder the NIHR.

**Partnerships:** Our HPRU exists in a context in which there is a considerable range of PPI/E activity. Imperial College London, holds a large annual engagement event the "Imperial Festival" and has a dedicated outreach team which works with local schools. The Imperial College NHS Trust Biomedical Research Centre has a dedicated PPI/E Manager and along with the NIHR Patient Experience Research Centre, offers a range of training and networking opportunities. The HPRU in HCAI and AMR is also one of three awarded to Imperial, all of whom have a commitment to PPI/E. Finally, Public Health England has its own Peoples' Panel. We will therefore work in partnership with all these groups to maximise opportunities for public and patient involvement and engagement, sharing resources, information and

best practice and collaborating wherever appropriate in the delivery of events or activities. We will also work with the NIHR for any joint HPRU initiatives and make best use of the resources and networks they provide and with existing relevant patient and public associations when appropriate to do so.

### **Objectives and activities:**

#### **INVOLVEMENT**

- **To ensure strategic input into the direction of the HPRU and its governance from patients and the public**
  - To recruit at least three patient representatives on the Scientific Advisory Board including one able to contribute to the Onehealth agenda
  - To ensure that all representatives are properly able to contribute by providing clarity of expectation through a patient representative role description, induction and where required to identify training provision
  - To make participation as easy as possible by assisting with travel arrangements, prompt payment of expenses/fees and other support as required
- **Where appropriate to encourage and facilitate patient and public involvement in specific research projects within the HPRU**
  - To ensure the HPRU Director and all theme leads actively encourage staff and PhD students within the HPRU to consider opportunities for public contribution in research projects
  - To communicate to all researchers the importance of patient and public involvement in their research wherever possible and to educate them about the range of activities “involvement” might entail
  - To encourage all researchers to take advantage of existing PPI/E training workshops offered by the Imperial College NIHR Biomedical Research Centre and others
  - To develop our own list of patients and public, in addition to our Scientific Advisory Board patient representatives, who can be contacted for input into research projects and proposals
  - To remain aware of alternative sources of patient and public contributors including the Imperial College BRC Panel, the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Patient Panel, the PHE Patient Panel and those of relevant patient organisations such as HCAI SURF and to work in partnership with these as appropriate.

## ENGAGEMENT

- **To communicate to all researchers the importance of patient and public engagement and to encourage them to participate in relevant activities**
  - To include in all job descriptions a clear requirement for HPRU staff to participate in public and patient engagement activities so that they are recognised as a core aspect of all roles
  - For the HPRU Director and theme leads to be flexible in allowing staff time to participate in such activities, for example by allowing time of in lieu for weekend activities
  - For all researchers to collaborate with theme leads and public and patient representatives to plan and implement effective engagement activities related to the research projects on which they work
- **To develop a range of communication channels to publicise the work of the HPRU and foster public engagement with our work**
  - To develop a dedicated HPRU website, including a section with information aimed specifically at patients and the public
  - To engage with the Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and PHE communications and press offices to develop feature articles for news stories/announcements and ensure an integrated message
  - To develop a newsletter about the HPRU's activities and grow a mailing list of interested parties including research collaborators, patient groups in the field of HCAI and AMR, interested individuals and other key stakeholders
  - To engage with social media platforms including other modes of communication to sign post the public to our research projects and PPE materials
  - To disseminate our work through the usual academic channels, but where appropriate to also consider secondary publication of our work in non-academic journals which may reach a wider audience in the healthcare sector and elsewhere
  - To ensure that all of our information aimed at patients and the public is easy to find and sufficiently understandable to meet their needs
- **To communicate about our work and our findings through attendance at conferences and at patient and public engagement events**
  - To attend appropriate academic conferences maximising opportunities for press and other coverage of our work

- To participate in patient and public engagement events pro-actively seeking to engage in events such the Imperial College Festival and the Biomedical Research Centre open days, which present opportunities to reach a wider and more diverse audience than the unit would be able to achieve on its own
  - Where practical to use national awareness initiatives in AMR, such as World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAM) as a springboard for our own Patient and Public Engagement
  - To ensure that our work has a clear presence at patient and public engagement events and where possible use this as mechanism to not only encourage the public to engage with our work, but also as a mechanism to grow our patient and public panel
- **To undertake outreach activities, using our local community and networks and beyond to communicate information about HCAI and AMR in general and our work in particular**
    - To engage with our our local community, including local schools and the 14,700 students and 8,000 staff of Imperial College
    - To develop activities relevant to HCAI and AMR (targeting students, teachers and parents) which can be delivered in local schools by the schools themselves, but also supported by our HPRU so that such interventions are self-sustaining
    - To use our outreach activities as a conduit through which to share our other engagement materials increasing people's knowledge and health literacy in relation to HCAI and AMR and encouraging appropriate health behaviours
    - To use the networks of our patient representatives, collaborating organisations and members to communicate about HCAI, AMR and our work.