



Involving patients and public in healthcare-associated infection research

Workshop 3: 20 May 2009 – Baker Street, London

Workshop Report

Introduction

Whether you are an active professional healthcare researcher who wants to learn more about how best to engage service users, or a member of the general public who wants to become more involved in infection-related research, the Service Users Research Forum (SURF) 09 Workshop was aimed at you.

Established in 2008 by the Department of Health funded National HCAI Research Network, SURF provides a forum to encourage greater patient and public engagement in infection-related research and supports involvement in a way that benefits all involved:

1. For patients and the public SURF represents an unprecedented opportunity to become more involved in the world of HCAI research.
2. For the HCAI research community SURF can act as a new resource providing researchers with a highly motivated pool of service users with a genuine interest in working to reduce HCAI.

Workshop Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this workshop was to provide a forum for people to discuss the ways in which public and patient involvement in healthcare research can benefit both researchers and service users. While the objectives of the workshop were to:

- Provide an opportunity for attendees to meet existing SURF Members,
- Facilitate the sharing of ideas of what real and effective user involvement in HCAI research means to both researchers and service users
- Provide attendees with a clearer understanding of what SURF can do for them
- Update SURF members on the current activities of the HCAI Network and discuss proposed SURF activities over the next 12 months;

The Process

Our third SURF Workshop was held on 20 May 2009 at the Baker Street Meeting Rooms, London and was attended by 19 participants, five of whom were SURF members, the rest a mixture of healthcare professionals, researchers and members of the public interested in HCAI research.

The day was split into Morning, Lunch and Afternoon sessions. The morning sessions focused on explaining what SURF does, discussing the importance of public and patient engagement in research and giving practical examples of how service users and researchers can best work together. Lunch gave attendees an opportunity to network and meet SURF Members. In the afternoon, the sessions were specifically aimed at providing new and existing Members with new skills and discussing potential future SURF projects and activities.

The workshop was free to both healthcare professionals and members of the public and places were allocated on a first come, first served basis. Attending the workshop did not commit attendees to any further involvement. Lunch was provided free and members of the public were reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses (at standard public transport rate).

Overview of Day

The day was then split into seven sessions shared between:

- Heather Loveday, Deputy Director of HCAI Research Network
- Simon Jones, SURF Coordinator
- Lucy Simons, INVOLVE Public Involvement Adviser
- Isabel Boyer, Lay Members Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistances and Healthcare Associated Infection
- Dr Peter Harper, Senior Lecturer at the Richard Wells Research Centre, Thames Valley University (London)
- Jean Cooper Moran, Senior Programme Manager, Patients and Public Involvement, National Institute for Health Research Central Commissioning Facility
- Graham Tanner, SURF Member

Session 1 - Welcome: The morning session commenced with a welcome and introduction from Heather Loveday. Heather discussed the aims of the day and presented an update of the current activities of the HCAI Research Network while outlining its proposed activities over the next 12 months. In her update, she discussed the fact that SURF has just entered its second year of existence and that funding had been secured to guarantee the forum's continuation for at least three more years.

Session 2 – SURF: Simon delivered a session introducing attendees to SURF, covering aspects of why the forum exists, what its key objectives are and what it has achieved so far. Simon spoke about how, unlike most other service user groups, SURF is open to all members of the public, with no specific connection to a condition or group of conditions required as a prerequisite for membership. Simon reported that since its establishment SURF had held two London workshops for members, developed its branding and created a new website to promote an online presence. SURF Members have presented at national conferences such as those organised by the Infection Prevention Society and INVOLVE. Simon also reported that in the first year of SURF, Members had been primarily involved in the commissioning and lay peer review aspects of the research

process. SURF Members have taken part and been involved in projects for organisations such as:

- Health Technology Assessment Programme
- Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) Programme
- Health Foundation
- National Institute for Health Research

Simon outlined that the objectives for the second year of SURF should include:

- Increasing the numbers of SURF Members
- Identifying research priorities in terms of the patient experience
- Focusing on service user initiated (and controlled) projects
- Developing online research training modules for service users
- Creating specific and defined roles for SURF Members
- Continued networking and building of links between service users and the HCAI research community to increase public involvement in HCAI research.

Session 3 and 4 – INVOLVE: Lucy Simons gave a double session. The first, entitled 'INVOLVE' explained the work of INVOLVE and discussed what public involvement in research is all about, the benefits of service user involvement and provided some examples of areas of research where members of the public were actively involved in all aspects of the research process. In this first session, Lucy also discussed the many challenges to effective service user involvement and discussed the ways in which INVOLVE can help both service users and researchers.

In her second, which was a group activity, Lucy had attendees take part in an interactive exercise which invited them to discuss one of two project scenarios which forced them to contemplate the process of service user involvement and come up with ways that such involvement could effectively be put into practice in a real world environment so that it would add value.

Session 5 – So what is it really like?: Isabel Boyer presented a session in which she candidly shared her experiences of what it is really like to be a service user involved in the research process. Isabel discussed what it has been like to be part of a commissioning board and gave tips for effective user engagement based on the challenges she has faced. After her presentation Isabel accepted questions from the floor.

Session 6 and 7: Session 6 and Session 7 were delivered concurrently. Session 6, aimed at service users and members of the public, was facilitated by Dr Peter Harper. This session was entitled 'Facilitating Focus Groups' and was intended to provide service users with new skills which they would be able to use as part of their involvement in the research process. In the session Peter covered what focus groups are, how they can be most effectively facilitated and what challenges may be faced. Session 7, was aimed at healthcare professionals and researchers. This session was facilitated by Heather Loveday and focused on what SURF can do to help researchers. The main questions up for debate was: 'What do you want and need from service users in terms of research?' Heather will use the findings from this session to help steer the objectives and remit of SURF.

Session 8 – Active Patient and Public Involvement: Jean Cooper Moran presented a discussion focused on the work of NIHR-CCF. Jean covered what NIHR-CCF is, what the Research for Patients Benefit Programme aims to do, what involvement as a 'lay assessor' means in practice and explained the benefits of the lay review process from a commissioning point of view.

Session 9 – Future Research: Graham Tanner ended the day with an open forum session focussed on developing service user led HCAI-research projects and discussed what the future objectives of SURF should involve. Graham's session encouraged interaction from all and started to lay down solid ideas for how SURF Members can create specific and defined roles for themselves in the development and submission of a proposal for a service user controlled piece of research.

Workshop Evaluation

At the end of the workshop participants were asked to complete a short evaluation form. Of those that returned a questionnaire, all had either a good or excellent overall impression of the event. One participant commented that the day gave a very detailed overview of public involvement issues and was a good mix of professionals, researchers and lay members. While another thought that there was perhaps too much concentration on what was required by researchers. However, all agreed that the workshop had given them a clearer idea of what public involvement in HCAI research is all about.

Individual sessions were all well rated, as was the venue, the information and assistance received prior to attending the workshop and the registration process.

Thanks

Finally, the HCAI Network and SURF staff would like to thank everyone for their contribution to a really successful day.