

Getting involved with INVOLVE

*OK, so you are keen to involve service users and carers in research, you've read the latest version of the SSRG policy statement *User and Carer Involvement in Research* (Feb 2006) and now you want some more practical 'know-how'. Help is at hand...*

In May, the EC were pleased to welcome Roger Steel, INVOLVE Development Worker, to discuss how we might work together to promote service user involvement among the social care research community. Roger, who has a lead role in social care for INVOLVE, has recently taken part in a number of SSRG events, including our last Annual Workshop and the SSRG/REU conference in November 2005. INVOLVE also played a key role in bringing a service user focus to the Research Governance Framework training workshops in Spring 2005, putting us in contact with research-minded users and attending almost all the workshops.

INVOLVE was originally set up in 1996 as Consumers in NHS Research, a national advisory group meeting quarterly with the aim of making sure that health research was of benefit to users and carers. In 2001, their remit was expanded to 'promoting public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research' and the name was changed to reflect this. INVOLVE is funded by the Department of Health and its work is carried out by a

Support Unit, which currently has 10 staff of whom 4 are full-time.

INVOLVE and SSRG have a lot to offer each other. Both organisations have excellent networks, hold topical events and produce a range of useful publications and guidance materials to support research related activity. INVOLVE also has lots of practical experience around access issues in the widest sense, while SSRG can support INVOLVE in developing a stronger social care and local authority focus. We look forward to continuing to work together by sharing publicity, taking part in each other's events and promoting active user and carer involvement at every opportunity.

INVOLVE publications are available in a variety of formats. They can be downloaded from the web or ordered free of charge. They include:

Perpetua Kirby (2004) *A Guide to Actively Involving Young People in Research: for researchers, research commissioners, and managers*

INVOLVE (2002, Revised 2003) *A Guide to paying members of the public who*

are actively involved in research: For researchers and research commissioners (who may also be people who use services)

Bec Hanley et al (2003) *Involving the Public in NHS, Public Health and Social Care Research: Briefing Notes for Researchers* (second edition)

To find out more about INVOLVE, to receive a regular free quarterly Newsletter or to book a place at their 5th national conference (6-7 September 2006 in Hertfordshire), visit the INVOLVE website at www.invo.org.uk



Roger Steel