

A Guide for Public Involvement

Below is some useful information on the principles and practice of public involvement, payment and reimbursement in the Faculty of Health & Social Care Sciences, Kingston University & St George's University of London. Please read this document carefully before signing your invitation letter and agreement.

1. Some working principles

- We want to assure you that there is no obligation on you to undertake any work or task offered to you if you do not feel it is something you want to be involved in. We recognise people have different skills and expertise and you may want to discuss and consider any request before committing to it.
- You will be expected to engage constructively with any activity you agreed to be involved with. Any issues with, or complaints about, a service should be directed to the NHS organisation concerned. We reserve the right to remove anyone from the database who does not adhere to the terms of this document.
- Our policies on equality, diversity and inclusion are a vital part of our work. It is important that, during your involvement, you respect and adhere to these values. You can find out more about our policies at:
www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/one-kingston/.
- It is important for you to understand that any offer of involvement is likely to be sporadic and there is no guarantee or obligation on the part of the organisation to offer any regular involvement, or further involvement once a task has been completed.
- If you are concerned that undertaking any task could impact on your health, ensure that you see your GP or another medical professional before agreeing to do it. If you have any specific requirements, for example wheelchair access or large print documents, please discuss this with the lecturer/researcher you are working with.
- In line with government recommendations during the time you are working with us, the nature of your relationship with the organisation will be that of an independent contractor, not an employee. This agreement does not constitute a contract of employment. You should not agree to undertake any task if you are not entirely sure what you are being asked to do and unless you have been fully briefed and prepared, including whether payment is being offered.
- As part of your involvement it is necessary that you comply with any instructions given to you in compliance with the organisation's Health and Safety Policies. You should report all accidents or incidents to the lecturer/researcher you are working with.

- It is your responsibility to ensure the safe keeping of any money or valuables you bring in to the University site. You are advised that the organisation does not accept responsibility for articles lost or damaged on its premises, whether by fire, theft or otherwise.
- When working, you may have access to, see or hear information of a confidential nature and you are required not to disclose such information.

2. How will I be paid?

- Payment will normally be made by direct payment to your bank account once the task is completed, and the finance department at Kingston University has received confirmation from the lecturer/researcher of your attendance. It may be possible to spread payment over more than one month to reflect preparation time and actual task time. Payment will typically take two weeks as it is processed through the Kingston central payment system.
- In instances where a service user or carer is representing an organisation, payments can be made directly to the organisation. Please provide the name and address for payment.
- Public involvement can be on a voluntary basis in which case no payment is made. If this is your preference, please let the lecturer/researcher know. Reimbursement of travel expenses will still be offered.

Will payment impact on my state benefits?

You may be in receipt of state benefits. Please be aware that fee payments and expense reimbursement can have implications for benefit entitlement.

It is important that you seek advice from the Benefits Agency, Tax Office or Jobcentre Plus as appropriate to ensure you remain within your benefit conditions. Breach of benefit conditions can result in benefits being stopped, so it is important that you are absolutely clear what you are entitled to earn before receiving any payments.

Some useful information for service users and carers can be found at <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/ataglance/ataglance50.asp>, and general information on benefits entitlement can be found on the Department for Work and Pensions website: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement>.

3. Can I claim for other expenses?

- You can usually claim for the cost of travel by public transport. The lecturer/researcher who has asked you to be involved will provide you with further information about this. Receipts will normally be required for all expenses that are to be reimbursed.

- If it is necessary for you to travel by taxi this should be discussed with the lecturer/researcher who has asked you to be involved. It is preferable, where possible, for the Faculty to book taxis for you, on account (rather than you making arrangements and being reimbursed).

4. Who has access to my personal details?

- Any information held about you will only be accessible to Faculty staff. We will not pass on any information to a third party outside of the Faculty without your consent.

5. What if I have a complaint or grievance?

- If you have any complaints or grievances relating to the work you are undertaking this should be made known as soon as possible to the module leader/lecturer, if appropriate, and to Claudine Shepherd, the Centre for Public Engagement Co-ordinator (claudine.shepherd@sgul.kingston.ac.uk / 0208 725 4764).

6. Keeping us updated

- In order to ensure that we are able to contact you about any future work of interest to you, please notify Claudine Shepherd (claudine.shepherd@sgul.kingston.ac.uk / 0208 725 4764) of any change in your circumstances, e.g. change of address or changes you wish to make to the type of involvement you wish to undertake.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this information which we hope is clear and helpful. We would, however, be very grateful for any feedback you have on these documents, both positive and where they could be improved. Please give your feedback to Claudine Shepherd (claudine.shepherd@sgul.kingston.ac.uk / 0208 725 4764).

This guide takes into account the guidance around payment and reimbursement as set out in the DH publication 'Reward and Recognition: *The principles and practice of service user payment and reimbursement in health and social care. A guide for service providers, service users and carers*' (Revised August 2006) and INVOLVE: Promoting public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research.

Consultation and agreement on this document has been sought and obtained from the Faculty Service User and Carer Involvement Forum and the Service User and Carer Steering Group in the School of Social Work.

We would like to thank you for your input into our work.