**Patient and public involvement: method comparison**

There is no right or wrong way to deliver patient involvement activities. The guide below will help you understand which methods are more appropriate depending on your needs.

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| **Involvement method** | **Survey** | **Interview** | **Focus group** | **Patient representative(s)** | **Advisory panel** |
| **Brief explanation** | A set of questions designed to gather opinions and perspectives from many people to inform and shape your research project. This should not be confused with conducting a survey as part of your research. They are time efficient and it’s rare to offer payment for this.  | An in-depth conversation that allows you to gather rich information. Interviews can be conducted face to face, online, or over the phone. They can be structured, semi-structured or informal. Expenses (if face to face) and an optional payment should be provided. | An event where you bring a group of people together to take part in well planned and facilitated discussions on a topic. Focus groups can be conducted face to face or online. You can use different activities and facilitation techniques to gather insights. Focus groups generally run over a half or full day. Expenses (if face to face) and an optional payment should be provided. | People affected by cancer that sit on an existing project team or steering group alongside other experts. There should be at least 2 patient representatives. This provides a range of perspectives and peer support. Patient representatives will receive training and an induction. They can work face to face or online. Expenses (if face to face) and an optional payment should be provided (as equal rate to other steering group members, if relevant).  | A group of people affected by cancer that provide feedback and new perspectives over a longer period. This provides a range of perspectives and peer support. Advisory panel members will receive training and an induction. They can work face to face or online. Expenses (if face to face) and an optional payment should be provided |
| **Cost** | Low | Medium | High | High | High |
| **Number of people involved** | High | Low/medium | Medium/high | Low | Medium/high |
| **Level of influence people affected by cancer will have** | Low | Medium | Medium | High | High |
| **Advantages** | * Large sample
* Time efficient
* Responses can be analysed with quantitative methods
* Honest insights
 | * Good for complex issues
* Can clarify questions or answers
* Rich qualitative information
* Honest insights
 | * Good for complex issues
* In depth discussion
* Group can bounce ideas off each other
* Many techniques for gathering insights
 | * Expertise increases with time
* Keeps research focused on patient benefit
* Act as critical friends
* Ongoing feedback and discussion throughout your research project
 | * Can build rapport
* Range of skills and experiences
* Expertise increases with time
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| **Disadvantages**  | * Can't clarify questions or answers
* Can’t gather in depth insights
* Limited on the type and number of questions
 | * Small sample size
* Time consuming
 | * People can be influenced by others’ opinions
* Time consuming
* Higher expenses
* Not always accessible to some groups
 | * Patient representatives can become experts (so are no longer 'lay')
* Can require a lot of support
* Limited number of perspectives
* Higher expenses
 | * Require a lot of support
* Friendships can change group dynamic
* Advisory panel members can become experts (so are no longer 'lay')
* Higher expenses
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