Author’s response to reviews

Title: Effective involvement: a report on the evaluation of a research awareness training package for public involvement in health research

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‘there appears to be no patient/lay representative involved in writing the paper itself, not in analysing the results of surveys.’ The first and second authors are lay members of the team. This has been made clearer on page 1.

‘There also appears to have been no lay involvement in designing the course and/or selecting the materials.’ Members of the Diamonds programme PPI group were directly involved in developing the course and materials. This has been clarified on page 4/5.

‘The paper does not specify what materials were used - were the presentations bespoke? Why did the team not use existing and proven materials such as (for example) the patient-co-designed Macmillan’s Building Research Partnerships? ’ The bespoke nature of the course is discussed in the last paragraph of page 4 and the first 2 paragraphs of page 5.

‘The paper covers the levels of satisfaction of the participants, but does not cover what use they have made of the training nor how useful they found it - has it improved skills and contributions, not simply knowledge and understanding?” This issues is now discussed on page 5/6.
the paper talks about "meaningful" contributions. Without a specific context, we suggest that the word "meaningful" is almost meaningless, or at least imprecise. Was the "meaning" to allow patients to make useful and effective contributions to health research, or was it to allow patients to "give back" and to feel good about the process; ie was it to add value to the research or to give "meaning" for the contributors? We accept that our use of the work 'meaningful' lacked clarity and the 2 instances of the word, on pages 13 and 14 have been removed.