

Example Terms of Reference for Patient Partner Groups

(Group name) Group Terms of reference and membership

Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to set out the scope of the (Group name) and provide guidance on how the group will function.

Introduction

The (Group name) was established in (date) with the purpose of improving patient experience through supporting, developing and promoting improved services at St George's Hospital.

Membership of the (Group name) is one of a number of ways to get involved with improving the patient experience. By sharing experiences of the services used, the (Group name) can help identify areas of good practice and areas of concern. This will help ensure that the services the Trust provides reflect the needs and views of the people who use them.

The Trust is committed to improving the patient experience and to listening to and involving people who use their services. Feedback will be used to steer continuous improvement, adopting best practice where possible.

Membership

The (Group name) is a group of people affected by (group focus). Members include (define the membership focus here). The group seeks to represent the whole community and to be accessible, inclusive, openly run and courteous. Members have a full understanding of the need for confidentiality and respect.

- It is anticipated that the total number of (Group name) members shall be in the order of up to (how many?) members, which will enable meetings to be attended by up to (Quorum?) members
- Once the membership numbers reach over 30? It is advisable to establish a Core group of members who will meet regularly i.e. monthly, bi-monthly to deal with the administration and development of the group. This group will publish notes of their meetings to the full membership.
- The membership joining document should establish what level of involvement the member is willing to give i.e. just attending big events, receiving news, being consulted in any format.

- The term of membership of **the Core group** will be for **(time period)** in the first instance to enable new members to have the opportunity to join. However, members who have completed their term will be allowed to extend their membership if no one else has registered an interest.
- Membership (general) will be reviewed yearly to ensure that as far as possible, it represents the local community. In particular, the **(Group name)** wants to reflect the views of 'hard to reach' communities, where there may be barriers preventing or inhibiting individuals from having a voice. Yearly review also provides an opportunity for members to consider their level of involvement if their personal circumstances change.
- **The Trust staff member will act as Joint Chair of the group.**
- A **Patient** Chair Person will be elected by the members and serve one year in the first instance. This will be reviewed annually and the appointment may be extended by a further two years up to a maximum period of three years.
- A Vice Chair will be elected, who in the absence of the Chair, will assume the role of chair. The Vice Chair may or may not be the Chair Designate. The appointment will be for one year in the first instance, which may be extended by a further two years up to a maximum period of three years. **The chair and vice chair positions should then be reviewed by the full committee.**
- The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by members of the **(Group name)** following an agreed selection process for the roles, depending on the number of expressions of interest.
- Co-opted members will be invited to join the group as and when required.
- A quorum will be required as the minimum for any decisions taken, to consist of Chairman/Vice Chair, plus three members (4).
- Any potential conflicts of interests should be declared by members.

Commitment to equality and diversity

- St George's encourages representation of people from diverse backgrounds but where this is not possible, strategies will be put in place to support communication and participation through links with established community groups in the practice locality.

Scope of the User Group

- The **(Group name)** is **not** a support group or the place to raise individual complaints or issues about services, departments etc. outside the remit of the group.
- Work with the Trust on a variety of projects where the contributions of patients and carers can improve the experience of patients cared for by the Trust.
- To be a source of advice to **(name the area/department that you support here).**

- To become an informed source of user/carer feedback to which relevant healthcare professionals may refer.
- Work with the Trust in seeking the views of patients and the public to highlight areas of good practice and make recommendations for improving services for patients and other service users.
- Liaise with other patient and carer involvement groups, community groups and 'hard to reach' groups to ensure that services are designed and developed to respond to the needs of individual patients.
- Raise the profile of user involvement within the (name the area/department that you support) and its value in helping to achieve improvements.
- Serve as an advisory group for other Trust committees and working groups which request patient or carer input.
- Liaise with other local service user groups.
- Identify specific areas where improvement is needed and, co-operating with relevant managers and health professionals ensure that patient experience makes a difference to the development of services.

Meetings

- Meetings will normally take place (meeting schedule – e.g. monthly and venue). Members will decide appropriate days / times for meetings, to enable as many groups, organisations and individuals as possible to be represented. Members will decide if other meetings need to be arranged depending on the importance of issues to be discussed.
- Members are expected to attend meetings regularly and to inform the Chair or representative if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- Notes will be taken as a record of the meeting, capturing agenda items discussed, decisions made, resulting actions with names and timelines.
- Any items to be included in the agenda should be sent to the Chair in advance of the agenda being distributed.
- The agenda, notes from the previous meeting and any other papers will be sent out by email a week in advance of the meeting.

Ground rules for meetings

- All members are asked to abide by the ground rules to ensure that meetings are properly run. The ground rules will need to be continuously reviewed by the group.
- Everyone is responsible for ensuring the success of the meeting.
- Meetings should start on time, and keep to time, unless under exceptional circumstances.
- Meetings should be chaired effectively.
- Everyone is responsible to adhere to and promote the ground rules.

- All members will promote an environment where individual members feel confident in communicating their own views, in the knowledge that they will be allowed time to speak and will be listened to.
- Members will bring with them different views and experiences. Each member is expected to respect the views and comments of others, while accepting they may not necessarily agree with these views.
- Everything discussed during the meeting remains confidential unless agreed otherwise.
- While sharing personal stories enables lessons to be learnt from experience and can inform the group's work, members should be mindful that the **(Group name)** is not a support group.
- Only one person should speak at a time.
- Jargon or acronyms should be avoided where possible and fully explained when they are used.
- If a member does not understand what has been said, they should feel comfortable asking the person to explain again.
- Members may wish to contact each other in between meetings and will have access to each other's contact details, as agreed by each individual.

Conflicts of interest

Any potential conflicts of interests should be declared by members.

- There may be times when involving **(Group name)** members with certain projects may raise issues around conflicts of interest with the individual or their family members.
- People who become involved with the **(Group name)** will be asked to declare any activities / interests which could cause a conflict of interest.

Support and training

- The **(Group name)** is supported by the **(Hospital Representative)** at St George's.
- Support will be given to encourage and empower members who may have communication difficulties.
- All new **(Group name)** members will be offered an induction pack and will be mentored by an established **(Group name)** member.
- Training opportunities will be offered to equip people with the knowledge and skills needed to undertake relevant **(Group name)** roles.

Confidentiality

- The **(Group name)** members will be required to work within the Trust's policies, procedures and guidelines. They may be party to sensitive discussions in particular, information relating to the diagnosis and treatment of patients and individual staff information, and have access to confidential

information that should not be passed on or shared outside the (Group name) meetings.

- The contact details of individual members will be stored on a database and will be kept in line with data protection guidelines. These details will be shared with (Group name) (as agreed by each individual) so that members can contact each other in between meetings.
- All the (Group name) members will be expected to sign a Confidentiality agreement as part of their induction process and agree to abide by the ground rules for meetings. Any breach of confidentiality, will result in membership of (Group name) being immediately terminated by the Chair.

Accountability and reporting arrangements

- People affected by (your health focus) who become members of other (similar health focus/ support) groups will be expected to feed back to the (Group name) on the progress of these groups.
- The (Group name) will advise, liaise with and convey views to the (name your support area/Department or Directorate.)
- The (Group name) will advise, liaise with and convey views to the Trusts Head of Patient Partnerships and Experience
- The (Group name) will hold an annual meeting to discuss membership, appointment of (Group name) roles (if relevant) and review the objectives for the following year.
- The (Group name) will produce an annual review of activity and achievements and will present this report to the Patient Partnership and Experience Group.

Transport

(Group name) members will be encouraged to make their own transport arrangements where possible and travel expenses (see (Group name) expenses claim form) will be reimbursed if claimed by prior agreement.

For those members who attend the meetings at the hospital by car, free parking in the Trust car park is available for the duration of the meeting/event. This will need to be agreed with the (your Hospital Representative) and a form will be given to present at the security office.

Free parking is available onsite after 5pm and weekends.

Financial support

Members will not receive any salary or attendance allowance. However, the following expenses will be reimbursed, subject to prior agreement and approval.

- Travel expenses to:
 - (Group name) meetings.

- When representing the (Group name) on Trust committees and working groups including the Directorate meetings and work stream groups.
- (Group name) events.
- Training.
- Other public and patient involvement activities agreed in advance

For further information about claiming travel expenses, please contact the (your Hospital Representative).

Review of Terms of Reference

The (group name) Terms of Reference will normally be reviewed every two years.