Some ideas for ground rules for your patient user group

Ground rules are important to ensure people can participate fully and fairly. It is a good idea to review these regularly.

Here are some examples from established user groups. Members should:

- be encouraged and supported to share their experiences/ views of services
- respect the views of others and avoid being judgmental
- allow others time to speak. Some people may not be used to speaking in a group/ committee situation or they may have a disability, which affects their speech
- respect confidentiality: issues, comments, views should not be discussed outside the meeting, unless members agree that they can be shared or minuted
- try to avoid abbreviations and jargon.

It is a good idea to check people's experience at the end of the meeting.

Did they feel their voice was heard? Were the papers clear? Were they clear about next steps and their own role? If not, what would make things better?