Name of study/trial steering group or name of informal/formal group

**Service user representative/project advisor role description**

**and person specification**

**Role description**

**Duration:**

Start date  dd/mm/yy  end date  dd/mm/yy

**Background to the research study/trial or background to the group and proposed research:**

add information about the study/trial

or (name of group) has been established in order to develop a research proposal/research proposals (add specific details).

**Involvement of service users:**

The name of study/trial steering group or name of group  wants to actively involve a broad spectrum of people who have used mental health services into its research advisory bodies and other activities. The importance of involvement at the early stages is a key part of this. Being a service user representative/project advisor on a is one of the ways that this can be achieved. Service user representatives/project advisors will participate in  study/trial steering group or name of informal group  meetings, providing firsthand experience of living with severe mental distress and knowledge about using mental health services. It is not intended that a service user representative/project advisor should represent any group of users of services or organisation. They should lend their perspective as someone affected by mental ill health.

**Remit:**

The (name of study/trial steering group or name of group) has been established in order to (insert details)

(eg oversee the name of study/trial. The steering group is responsible for:

* providing co-ordination to the study;
* acting as an advisory group to the research team;
* enabling exchange of ideas in order to ensure issues are resolved;
* other responsibilities.

**Membership:**

The overall membership of the group will fluctuate over the period of the study/trial/development of the proposal as needs change.

The following people are currently members of the group.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  Names of member     |  Role or organisation   |
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As the group may deal with privileged information, confidentiality procedures may be put in place to maintain the integrity of some of the information discussed or circulated for meetings.

**Activities:**

The group's activities will include:

* activity
* activity
* activity
* activity
* activity

(eg if group developing research proposals: investigating the proposed research study; considering the scope, extent and appropriate methodologies; preparing, consulting on and refining proposals; submitting a bid to funding bodies in collaboration with others, as appropriate)

**Responsibilities of service user representative/project advisor:**

The service user representative/project advisor will participate in the name of group meetings, bringing their knowledge and experience of living with mental ill health to their input, along with knowledge about mental health services.

Service user representatives/project advisors may also be asked to:

* attend the group meetings. While attending meetings, service user representatives/project advisors will be expected to contribute to the discussions which guide the group’s decisions and recommendations. We understand that people may be unable to attend all meetings but regular attendance is encouraged.
* read relevant paperwork in preparation for meetings.
* comment on ideas/exchange ideas informally.
* contribute to and review research proposals.

Service user representatives/project advisors may be asked to:

* attend a session to help to prepare for active engagement within the group.
* occasionally attend other meetings in order to share information concerning the study/trial/research proposals.

Attendance at these other meetings may provide opportunities to meet members of other groups and keep in touch with current developments relevant to the work.

**Support:**

Service representatives/project advisors will be supported by the group to feel confident in their role. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

* jargon is kept to a minimum, or explained via a glossary attached to

 the agenda of each meeting.

* service user representatives/project advisors will be invited to submit

 their contributions to the agenda before each meeting.

* administrative support is provided. Members of the group can choose

 to receive papers by email and/or hard copy format.

* papers are circulated in advance of group meetings to provide sufficient time

 for a response, where appropriate.

* a standing item on the agenda will allow service user representatives/project advisors to raise issues about their participation and involvement.
* pre-meetings between the service user representatives/project advisors and chief investigator/chair of the group  (or other appropriate person – eg an experienced researcher) can be arranged on request.
* appropriate training will be available.

Sufficient representation of service users will be built in to ensure that, should one or more service users become unwell, there will be no loss of service user input.

It is also recommended that the support of an appointed mentor to advise on technical or scientific aspects of the paperwork or meeting is available. This may be someone within the group who is a healthcare professional, an experienced service user or an experienced researcher. Once familiar with the processes, service user representatives/project advisors may be asked to act as a mentor for new members in the future.

**Communication:**

Communication will normally be via email. However, telephone or written communication will be arranged, where preferred.

**Payment and expenses:**

Expenses for attendance by service user representatives/project advisors at meetings and for all other pre-aranged work undertaken will be reimbursed at the following rates:

add information about payment and expenses

Service user representatives/project advisors may also choose to waive the payment fee or receive a lower amount following a discussion. Further guidance on payment, along with possible implications for benefits, tax and National Insurance can be found in the MHRN Service Users and Carers Payment Policy: Benefits Systems and Conditions around Paid and Voluntary Involvement (April 2010), which is availble at <http://www.mhrn.info/publications>

**Time commitment:**

It is not possible to be precise over time to be spent in this role, as this will vary. However it is currently envisaged that the group will meet insert anticipated frequency of meetings.The location and dates of meetings will be determined by the group. In addition, time will also need to be spent reading and responding to issues by email or by phone.

**Attendance and termination of involvement:**

Service user representatives/project advisors may withdraw from the role at any time. The chief investigator/chair of the group should be notified of this decision as soon as possible. This position is for an initial period of a year, to be reviewed thereafter on a insert renewal period  basis.

Members are asked to give their apologies if they cannot attend a meeting. We understand that you may be unable to attend all meetings, but regular attendance is encouraged.

**Person specification**

**Essential:**

* Experienced mental health service user.
* Knowledge about mental health treatments/services relevant to the

 study/work of the group.

* Good communicator.
* Ability to listen to others and express views in a constructive and polite way,

 including within meetings.

* Ability to work effectively with people form diverse backgrounds.
* Reliable and trustworthy.

**Desirable:**

* Knowledge of service user organisations.
* Experience or knowledge of research studies, or an understanding of research.
* Ability to review research proposals.

Created by:  name of person who originated document

Designation:  title of person who originated document

Date:  dd/mm/yy

Review date:  review date