Support for steering group members

The different kinds of support that members of the public involved in steering groups may need include:

Practical support – ensuring group **meetings are accessible** and fees and expenses are paid promptly. It's also important to be clear from the beginning about issues such as how often the group will meet and where it will meet, whether teleconferencing is involved, and when to expect papers and so on.

Emotional / psychological support – to manage people's frustrations with the research process or outcomes, and any distress caused by revisiting their experiences of illness or services, and to help in situations where other group members challenge the benefits of involvement.

Personal and professional development – providing constructive feedback (positive and/or negative) on people's contributions in meetings,. This can help members of the public recognise how much they contribute and how to do that most effectively. People may value support to bring their personal experience to meetings in the most appropriate way, especially as this may be in contrast to other members' contributions and to their experience in other settings (for example their professional life). See **case study 13**.

On-the-job support – providing a glossary of research terms and acronyms used in the project and offering people opportunities to 'let off steam' after difficult meetings.