

NIHR INVOLVE Coordinating Centre

INVOLVE Advisory Group - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The INVOLVE Advisory Group challenges, advises and provides guidance on the strategic direction and work programme of INVOLVE with a focus on achieving optimum public involvement in and through its work.
- 1.2 The Advisory Group provides an independent perspective, objective oversight and acts as a “critical friend” in relation to the strategy and work of INVOLVE.
- 1.3 The Advisory Group does not set strategy or work programmes for INVOLVE. That responsibility rests with the INVOLVE leadership/Executive Group aligned to the contractual requirements.
- 1.4 Up to three public members of the Advisory Group are represented on the Executive Group. The Advisory Group votes amongst itself, in a fair and transparent process, for these members to join the Executive Group, when vacancies are anticipated or become available.
- 1.5 Advisory Group members additionally contribute to INVOLVE’s work at a project level. Members may be selected, through a fair and transparent process, to bring an Advisory Group/public perspective to a particular time-limited project or activity.
- 1.6 The Advisory Group is non-executive and as such has no delegated authority other than that specified in these terms of reference.
- 1.7 The influence of the Advisory Group and its members throughout the work of INVOLVE is illustrated in Figure 1.
- 1.8 The work of the INVOLVE Advisory Group takes place within the guiding framework of the INVOLVE contract, the values and principles of INVOLVE, and its policies and procedures (including the INVOLVE Diversity and Inclusion statement).

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The INVOLVE Advisory Group challenges, advises and provides guidance on the strategic direction and work programme of INVOLVE with a focus on achieving optimum public involvement in and through its work. The focus for this work is on how INVOLVE can:
- Achieve greater diversity in public involvement
 - Adopt new and innovative approaches to public involvement
 - Adopt new technologies and web-based mechanisms that will assist effective public involvement
- 2.2 Agendas for Advisory Group meetings will usually cover one or more of the following:
- Strategic developments relating to INVOLVE and the broader environment, as relevant to the work of INVOLVE.
 - INVOLVE Work programme: maximising impact and future directions
 - Making sense of future challenges and opportunities
 - Exploring topics of relevance and interest to the work of the Advisory Group
 - Development activities
- 2.3 Agendas for Advisory Group meetings will be agreed in advance by the Chair and Director of INVOLVE, having invited topic suggestions from the membership.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 3.1 The Advisory Group provides an independent and unique perspective on the strategy and work programme of INVOLVE. It advises the Director of INVOLVE.
- 3.2 The Director of INVOLVE, with the support of the public members of the Advisory Group who sit on the Executive Group, will take any recommendations from the Advisory Group for consideration by the Executive Group, who have contractual oversight. The Advisory Group members on the Executive Group and the Director of INVOLVE will ensure that the outcomes of Executive Group discussion on these recommendations are communicated back to the Advisory Group.
- 3.3 The Advisory Group members undertaking projects with INVOLVE will ensure that the outcomes of project group activity are communicated back to the wider Advisory Group.

- 3.4 The Chair of the Advisory Group (separate Role Description) is responsible for ensuring that individual members of the Advisory Group, and the Advisory Group as a whole, operate effectively and in line with the Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and INVOLVE values. They ensure that Member and Group performance is annually reviewed, with input from the INVOLVE Director (who may seek stakeholder input).
- 3.5 All members of the Advisory Group will be expected to be aware of and adhere to the Ground Rules.

4. MEMBERSHIP AND QUORUM

Membership

- 4.1 The Advisory Group consists of between 12 and 16 members plus a Chair.
- 4.2 Membership of the Advisory Group is made up of public members and non-public members (see definitions at point 8). The intention is to ensure that the Advisory Group is diverse and inclusive and that there is an appropriate mix of skills, experiences and perspectives to challenge, advise and provide guidance on INVOLVE strategy and work programmes.
- 4.3 The balance of the membership will normally be maintained in favour of public members (see definitions at point 8) where it helps to broaden diversity and/or to support succession in public involvement
- 4.4 The contribution of public and non public members is at all times equal and valuable.

Replacing members

- 4.5 The Director of INVOLVE, in consultation with the Chair, will periodically convene a recruitment sub group, comprised of INVOLVE employees/partners and Advisory Group members (selected by fair process). This sub group identifies diversity & inclusion and skills/experience gaps within the Advisory Group. The sub group steers INVOLVE to achieve a wider range of applications from under represented communities, groups and seldom heard voices, and effective recruitment and selection processes (aligning with the INVOLVE Diversity & Inclusion policy).
- 4.6 Recruitment to the Advisory Group is by a fully open public process with a clear role description/person specification. Applicants are usually short listed and interviewed by a panel typically consisting of the Director of INVOLVE, the Chair of INVOLVE and two Advisory Group members of which at least one will be a public member.
- 4.7 The tenure of Advisory Group members is normally for a three year period. Tenures are staggered to ensure continuity of membership and to support succession within the Group. Tenures can be extended in certain circumstances at the discretion of the Director of INVOLVE, and on the

recommendation of the Chair of the Advisory Group; for example when a piece of work that a member is working on goes beyond their tenure.

Observers

- 4.8 One observer from each of the following organisations will be invited to all meetings:
- Department of Health
 - Research Design Service
 - Research networks
- 4.9 Other observers are invited by agreement of the Chair and INVOLVE Director on behalf of the Advisory Group, as and when relevant to the agenda of the meeting and the current work of the Advisory Group.
- 4.10 Observers at any meeting will not normally exceed a third of the Advisory Group membership (e.g: if 16, no more than 5 observers).
- 4.11 Observers are expected to bring their experience and skills and be fully involved in discussions. Observers are unable to vote or be counted towards quorum, but their contribution will be valued and carry equal weight to full members.

Quorum

- 4.12 The Advisory Group is an advisory, not a decision-making group, and normally operates by consensus. In the rare event that consensus cannot be reached regarding a significant and far reaching matter, the Chair may – at their discretion – invite members to vote. In such instances, the Chair will ensure fullest discussion, and each individual will be given the opportunity to express their views prior to a vote. The majority vote will be carried.
- 4.13 The Chair has a casting vote.
- 4.14 The quorum (proportion of members, including Chair, who must be present for any vote) is two-thirds of the members of the Advisory Group (e.g: 11, when there are 16).
- 4.15 In particular circumstances, and at the discretion of the Chair, a member who is not able to attend the meeting physically, may vote where they have otherwise been able to fully participate in the whole meeting by video or tele conferencing, provided they are identifiable as themselves. No proxy votes are permitted.

5. REVIEW

- 5.1 The Terms of Reference of the Advisory Group will be reviewed at least every year by the Director of INVOLVE and the Chair, with input from the Advisory

Group. Changes to the Terms of Reference must be agreed by the Executive Group and the Department of Health.

- 5.2 The work of the Advisory Group will usually be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that its focus is compatible with the strategic direction of INVOLVE and effective. Work of the Advisory Group will be reviewed by the Chair with input from partners and stakeholders.

6. MEETINGS

- 6.1 Meetings will be held twice a year approximately six months apart, usually in an accessible central location (e.g: London).
- 6.2 The Advisory Group will be supported by the INVOLVE Coordinating Centre who will help the Chair to plan agendas and minute the meetings.
- 6.3 Agenda and papers will be sent electronically to Advisory Group members two weeks in advance of the meetings. Copies in different formats can be provided upon advance request.
- 6.4 Members are expected to read papers in advance and to attend meetings fully prepared to discuss agenda items.
- 6.5 The INVOLVE Coordinating Centre will strive to ensure that support needs of members can be accommodated appropriately to support their fullest participation, in line with INVOLVE policies and procedures.
- 6.6 Minutes of proceedings will be taken, which will usually be circulated electronically to the Group within 10 working days of the meeting. There is then a window of 10 working days within which corrections may be made, before minutes are signed off by the Chair and Director of INVOLVE, and published on the INVOLVE website.
- 6.7 The Advisory Group will operate on a basis of openness and transparency. There will be defined exceptions where a paper or issue is regarded as confidential (for example, where contractual requirements dictate or where information is business sensitive). Minutes and papers will be circulated to Advisory Group members via email or by hard copy where needed.

7. ISSUE RESOLUTION

- 7.1 In the event that a member wishes to raise a concern relating to the Advisory Group or its functioning, they should raise this with the Chair, who will take steps to support the member to address the issue appropriately. Action will be taken by the Chair within 20 working days, and resolution completed within a further 20 working days (confirmed electronically between the Chair and the concerned party). The Chair will keep the member and the Director of INVOLVE informed of steps taken to resolve the situation and the outcome. The Director of INVOLVE will be the final arbiter.

- 7.2 In the event that a member has a complaint about an individual they should normally try and resolve the issue directly with the person(s) concerned. If this doesn't work or is inappropriate given the complaint, the INVOLVE complaints [policy](#) should be followed.
- 7.3 Any member, employee of INVOLVE or partner organisation may raise a suspected breach of the Terms of Reference or Code of Conduct by a member. The matter will be investigated by the Chair (or by the Director of INVOLVE, if about the Chair). If the suspected breach is serious, the Director of INVOLVE will also investigate. Two minor confirmed breaches, or one serious confirmed breach within any tenure period will result in immediate disqualification from the Advisory Group.

8. DEFINITION OF TERMS RELATING TO THE INVOLVE ADVISORY GROUP

- 8.1 When is a member a “public member”?

Any member who contributes relevant skills and has an interest in and/or recent lived experience of accessing health and care services and/or participation in research (as a service user, patient, carer).

A public member does not normally bring the additional recent professional experiences within the health and care or research system outlined at 8.2, and therefore draws uniquely upon their own health/care experiences as well as relevant skills they have developed outside the health and care or research system.

- 8.2 When is a member not a public member (a “non-public member”)?

Any member that has worked in health, social care and or Public Involvement research, health and care professions or policy in the UK within the last 5 years, or who has been participating regularly in Public Involvement or Engagement work in health and care research for more than three years, is normally not described as a public member for the purposes of this Group, though it is recognised that they also valuably contribute their own interests and lived experiences of health and care as a patient or carer.

- 8.3 Why does the INVOLVE Advisory Group differentiate “public member” and “non-public member”?

To help us focus on achieving a balance of experiences and skills on the Advisory Group which support us in achieving diversity and inclusion and to ensure that we are challenged to consider the broadest possible range of perspectives within our work.

Focusing in this way helps us to “walk the talk” of public involvement, and to model the benefits across NIHR and beyond, of striving for diversity and inclusion and being open to being challenged by a broad range of perspectives.

Agreed by INVOLVE Executive Group & Department of Health on 24th August 2016

Review date 26th September 2018

Figure 1

LESS ABOUT HIERACHY, MORE RELATIONSHIP/FUNCTIONING

