

Transparent process for recruitment on panels of people affected by cancers (patients and carers)

Please note: This is one example way of diversifying a patient panel, but there are other methods that may be more appropriate for you. For further information they can seek advice from a HR specialist.

Background

Cancer Research UK's Patient Involvement Team have two Cancer Insights Panels. These groups of about 15 individuals are made up of people affected by cancer (patients and carers) who help to shape and influence our work.

We will be recruiting new panel members (patients and carers) in accordance with [The Equalities Act 2010](#) as best practice. Whilst the recruitment practices are specific to employees not volunteers, it provides a publicly acceptable framework in which to work.

In order for our panels to function at high-quality and be of service to different teams and, ultimately, the organisation they need to reflect varied UK cancer population. We have detailed below our intended group composition which we will use to guide our recruitment process. In order to achieve this diversity, we need direct intervention throughout the recruitment journey; from attraction, application, through to selection.

Please note that this has been informed by an extensive research period with core teams across the organisation, to support the need for both traditional and non-traditional CRUK audiences to be part of the panel make-up.

This document focuses on the selection process, but details of our diversification of communications channel and restructure of our application process are referenced and can be shared in greater detail.

We will be recruiting in the context of our remaining members to ensure we strike the right balance.

We have mapped continuing members to identify who they were. Mapping confirmed the lack of diversity in the panels.

The main demographics we want to increase:

- BAME members
- Younger people (under 40s)
- Cancers of unmet need as per team strategies.

Our approach:

As supported by several discussions with our HR EDI manager in HR, taking proportionate steps to attract people from under-represented groups is a commonly accepted way of diversifying the panel.

Our recruitment process is therefore as follows:

Attraction stage:

- People from the under-represented groups outlined earlier are strongly encouraged to apply.
 - We have a statement in our role profile and Diversity Monitoring Form and will send a targeted email to our pool of BAME people on Your Involvement Network stating that our panels are currently under-represented, and we want to increase the panels' diversity.
 - 2 out of 4 case studies written for our web pages, social media and newsletter feature BAME people, and 1 features a young person.
 - We have diversified our comms channels to include volunteer organisations & community-based initiatives.

Application stage:

- We have simplified the application process, making all questions more straightforward so that candidates can demonstrate how they meet essential criteria more easily.
- All applicants will still have to go through a formal recruitment process to assess their motivation and suitability for the role (whether they meet the essential criteria). Therefore, candidates are not being allocated or chosen for a role *based* on their ethnicity, age, etc.

Shortlisting process:

- We will shortlist applicants within these pools as normal against the essential criteria, using an objective scoring method.
- We will invite a set percentage of applicants who successfully meet the criteria from each pool to interview.
- We will monitor the percentage of people interviewed in line with the total number of applicants. This will give us an indication of how successful our efforts have been at attracting under-represented groups to apply.

Interview process:

- If successful at interview, we anticipate that we will appoint members from the priority audiences outlined at the beginning of this document, this is not fixed but entirely dependent on quality of application & interview.

Concerns:

Some concerns have been voiced to us namely around reputational risk, but we have identified a range of reasons as to why increasing the diversity of our panels will be highly beneficial:

- Panels by nature should be representative of the population and therefore requires diversity (of ethnicity, ages, experiences) to be fit-for-purpose
- The CRUK Patient Involvement team is working to ensure we increase the diversity of people who influence our work. One example of this is by addressing health inequalities and we know that ethnicity and age are big factors influencing inequality

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- Diversity in Patient Involvement is something that the entire charity sector struggles with, so we aspire to improving diversity and become sector leaders.

If there is any negative public opinion, this can be managed easily by the way we respond, and our recruitment materials are worded. Furthermore:

- CRUK is committed to using positive action in recruitment activities where it is deemed necessary and appropriate.
- We are committed to removing barriers that some groups experience to ensure that all applicants will still be given a fair chance and opportunity to be involved with us.

Useful link:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/discrimination-at-work/what-doesn-t-count-as-discrimination-at-work/discrimination-at-work-positive-action/>