Terms of reference template

This template is designed to help you develop terms of reference for a group such as a project advisory group or panel. The suggested headings and questions are not intended to be prescriptive but will give you some ideas based on what other people have included in their terms of reference.

Name of group:

Title: Terms of reference (followed by date terms of reference written / revised)

Purpose / role of the group: for example

- what is the broad purpose / role of the group?
- when was the group established and by whom?
- what are the aims / responsibilities of the group?

Membership: for example

- who is membership of the group open to?
- are there any restrictions on numbers?
- are patient / public members involved?
- are any representatives from other organisations included?
- how long is the period of membership and can it be extended?

Accountability: for example

- are individual group members responsible for reporting back on activities of the group and if so to whom?

Review: for example

- how often will the group review the relevance and value of its work and the terms of reference?

Working methods / ways of working: for example

- what method / approach to working will you adopt (for example a shared learning approach)?
- will any sub groups be convened?
- what will your chosen working method involve in practical terms, for example with reference to:

meetings for example

- how many meetings will be held each year and where will they be held?
- who will organise and chair the meetings?
- how will topics for the agenda be generated?
- how and when will meeting papers be circulated?
- what will the format of meetings be, for example will they include small group discussions?
- will non-members be invited to group meetings and if so, under what circumstances?
- who will provide secretariat for the group?

sharing of information and resources (including confidential materials) for example

- how will group members share information and resources?
- how will confidential materials and copyright issues be identified and dealt with?
- will there be a web space for the group and if so, will it be password protected and who will be responsible for facilitating it?

Definition of terms

- provide definitions of any key terms.