**Terms of reference:**

Drafted:

Approved:

Revised:

Owner:

**[Research Team Name] Critical Friends Group**

**And/or**

**[Research Team Name] Advisory Board**

1. **Purpose/role of the Critical Friends Group**

The Critical Friends Group are Research Advisors who are individuals invited by the Research Team to provide verbal and written feedback at different stages of the project on progress and outputs.

The Advisory Board are Research Advisors who are individuals invited by the Research Funding Agency to provide verbal and written feedback to the Research Team at different stages of the project on progress and outputs. The Chair of the Advisory Board provides written feedback to the Research Funding Agency on an annual basis.

The groups were established early in [date] and will remain in operation until [date]. This date may be extended if there is a contract variance or extension.

All members of the groups are involved on an adhoc basis.

The aim of both groups is to support the research team by providing critical feedback to the [named] research project. This will assist the team to deliver the project on time, against the agreed outcomes and measures, and within budget. The project protocol gives full details of the work packages, deadlines and lead for each element of work.

1. **Membership:**

The members of the Critical Friends Group will be individuals with appropriate expertise and lived experience to advise on specific or a diverse range of activities and outputs.

Individuals may be public involvement representatives (see PI definition below), academics, practitioners, commissioners, or other relevant people.

Members may be asked to take part in individual activities such as reading materials or testing an output and/or to attend group meetings to give collective feedback.

Membership can start and finish at any time during the life of the project but will conclude no later than the end of the project as outlined in 1.

An Advisory Board may be comprised of individuals with appropriate research, work and lived experience.

1. **Accountability**

All members of the Critical Friends Group are ultimately responsible to the Chief / Principal Investigator; however, they may from time to time be asked to participate by a designated research team member.

The Advisory Board is impartial and its feedback and questions are welcomed as part of a healthy dialogue and working relationship. They are ultimately responsible to the Research Funding Agency.

1. **Working methods / ways of working:**

All individuals on the Critical Friends Group will work independently, in small groups or as a wider team to support the research team to deliver the project outputs on time. Formal meetings will be held twice a year, at [add location name].

The Critical Friends Group and research team can use the most effective methods of working suitable for each task they engage in, individually or as a group, including but not limited to: face to face meetings, telephone, conference calls, conference videoing, emails.

Formal meetings of the Advisory Board will be held once a year, at [add location name]. These will be organised and chaired by the Chief / Principal Investigator, or designate. The agenda will be circulated prior to the meeting along with relevant papers for discussion. Visitors may be invited to attend. [Add name / job title] will take responsibility for the minutes.

1. **Sharing of information and resources**

The data shared with the groups will be anonymised. All draft and finished outputs should remain confidential until the launch of materials.

1. **Definition of terms**

Public Involvement representatives: patients, service users, survivors, carers and family members (National Standards for Public Involvement in Research, NIHR 2018. Available from: <https://sites.google.com/nihr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home>)

Co-researcher: A public involvement representative undertaking active research as part of a research team on an ongoing basis

Research Advisor: A public involvement representative actively engaging with a research project on an adhoc basis (specific activities)

Critical Friends Group: A group of individuals invited by the project team to act as a sounding board on activities and progress, providing feedback and support either as individuals or as a group. This may include research advisors, but has PI representation.

Advisory Board: A group of individuals approached and appointed by the Research Funding Agency. The will act as a sounding board on activities and progress. They will report to the Research Funding Agency.