# Issues to think about before you start – support

**Invest time in building good relationships.** If you are approachable it is more likely that group members will feel at ease and be open and honest when they experience difficulties in their role.

**Be flexible in supporting advisory group members**. As the work of advisory groups tends to evolve in parallel with the progress of a research project, the support needs of the group are also very likely to change over time.

**Build in sufficient time and resources for support.** Providing support can be time-consuming and needs to be adequately resourced to be effective. Set aside time in your working week to support the group/individuals. Make it an integral part of your job, with budgeted time planned into the project milestones rather than an optional add-on in your 'spare' time.

**Encourage peer support.** Group members can offer valuable support to each other and this form of support can be encouraged by creating the right environment, for example by exchanging contact details and allowing time in meetings and / or creating opportunities for socialising to enable supportive relationships to develop.