

# Training for advisory group members

Training for advisory groups often begins with an [introduction/induction day](#), where group members are given information about the research project they are working on, with opportunities to ask questions and discuss their role. This session works best when members can meet face-to-face – even if later meetings take place by phone. It is useful to cover the following topics in an induction session:

- Background information about the research methods being used – how these methods are generally applied, what they aim to achieve and common terms used.
- Background information about the condition being investigated – how this research project addresses a gap in current knowledge, and where it fits in the context of other current research.
- Specific information about the research project – its aims, what stages are involved, who will be carrying out different aspects of the work.
- A discussion of the various ways in which members of the group could be involved, a clear explanation of what the research team expects from their involvement as well as opportunities for group members to express their interests and preferences as to what they would like to do at different stages of the project.
- A discussion of practical arrangements, for example how often the group will meet, how expenses will be paid, how support will be provided, how communication will be maintained during the project and how long the involvement will last for – with opportunities for group members to shape these processes to meet their needs.

An induction session is not just about providing information to group members. It is the start of a conversation between

researchers and group members about how they want to work together and how best to make the involvement work. This discussion is likely to be ongoing throughout the project as the work of the group evolves.

At the end of the induction session advisory group members should have a clear understanding of:

- what the project is about and what it aims to achieve
- the various stages of the process involved
- what can be achieved and what can't be achieved through the research
- which aspects of the research can be changed in response to advisory group input and which aspects are non-negotiable
- where their input will bring added value to the project
- how they will be supported and trained during the rest of the project.

It can be useful to provide written handouts to the group that summarise this information that they can then refer to throughout the project.

After this initial induction, any subsequent training of group members is usually integral to their involvement and takes place 'on-the-job'. For example, if members of the group are involved in developing recruitment processes and / or a participant information sheet, it can be useful to give them some background information about the requirements of ethics committees and standards of good practice.