

# **UK Age Research Forum**

## **Governance Arrangements**

UKARF is a strategic partnership between government, research councils and charities that aims to make a positive difference to the lives of older people through research.

### **1. Vision**

The vision of the forum is to promote high quality research that is well funded, effectively targeted and monitored, multi-disciplinary when appropriate and closely engaged with potential research users, and that ultimately has a beneficial impact on the quality of life of people as they age.

### **2. Members**

Members are key funders in the field of ageing research who demonstrate that:

- A significant part of their research in the UK is relevant to ageing and/or older people;
- They have an appropriate research governance system for ensuring the scientific quality of the research they fund.

Organisations may be invited to join the Forum, or may apply to the Forum directly. The Steering Group (see point 5) first reviews all potential new members to assess whether they meet the above criteria. The Group's recommendation (of either acceptance or non-acceptance) will be put to the Chair and Forum members for a final decision.

### **3. Observers**

Organisations who do not fulfil the above criteria but who, with the agreement of the majority of the Forum members, are deemed to make a significant contribution to the Forum, may be invited to attend as observers for fixed terms. Observers have the right to attend Forum meetings and sit on working groups, but cannot participate in Forum voting.

### **4. Chair**

The chair is appointed by member nomination and voting by Forum members. The term of office is 3 years, and the Chair may stand for election for a further three year term.

## 5. Steering Group

The Steering Group provides strategic and operational direction to UKARF. The Steering group is made up of core membership from the Forum. Nominations for steering group membership can be via self-nomination but should be seconded by another full member of the Forum, or nominated by another full member. At a minimum the group will consist of representatives from:

- Research Councils
- UK Health Departments
- Research Charities (to include the host of the forum)

### 5.1 Chair

The Steering Group chair is elected by the Steering Group members. The nomination is then put to the Chair and Forum members for ratification; in the event of objections there would be a vote. The term of office is for three years, and the Chair may stand for election for a further three year term.

The Forum Chair and Steering Group Chair should be from different organisations.

### 5.2 Meetings

The Steering Group will meet twice annually, no more than 2 months prior to the main Forum meetings. Correspondence between meetings will continue via email. Additional meetings may be called for specific matters where email correspondence is not sufficient.

## 6. Programme Manager

The Programme Manager is currently employed by the **host organisation**. They are responsible for facilitating the day to day running of the Forum and helping to develop its ongoing activities. The Programme Manager reports to the Chair of the Steering group for work related issues, and to the host line-manager for terms and conditions of work.

## 7. Meetings

Full Forum meetings are held twice yearly. Work of forum groups continues between meetings with email and telephone correspondence as well as with specific working groups dedicated to priority topics, as defined by the members. On-going work is co-ordinated by the Programme Manager.

### 7.1 Notice of meetings

Meeting dates will be set in advance via email consultation to determine most convenient dates. The Programme Manager will send an agenda and papers to every member seven clear days before the day of the meeting. Minutes will be circulated by the Programme Manager within the two weeks following the meeting (after approval by the Chair).

## **8. Finances**

UKARF currently has funding, given by some of the Members, for a three year period, 2007 - end 2009. Mid way through this period, the steering group will meet and produce a Business Case for funding for the following period. This document will be available to all members. Contributing financially to the Forum is not required for membership.

The MRC is the current budget holder for UKARF funds and is responsible for invoicing contributions from members on an annual basis.

The Steering Group and Forum Chair have overall responsibility for day to day management of UKARF funds. Any plans to spend UKARF funds (Programme Manager salary, meeting expenses, and office consumables excepted) will first be put to all members of the steering group for approval. Once given, the Chair of the Forum will formally sign off approval. Any subcontracted arrangements will be clarified by a memorandum of agreement.

Detailed records of all accounts and receipts will be held by the Programme Manager and an annual report will be produced. Expenses paid for by the host's funds will be recouped from the budget holder in a timely manner.

## **9. Ways of working:**

- ◆ Correspondence and decisions can be made between meetings both by the steering group and the Forum through email. The Programme Manager can also be contacted at any time for discussion.
- ◆ In the event of a vote being required, decisions will be made on a majority basis (observers are not able to vote).
- ◆ Working Groups of forum members (and observers plus appropriate nominees) may be established to take forward or oversee activity on a range of key topics; Working Groups will report on these key topics at the twice yearly forum meetings
- ◆ The Programme Manager will facilitate communication between meetings and to help co-ordinate the Working Groups