

# Role of CLRN Specialty Group Local Leads

## 1. National Role of Specialty Group Local Lead

- 1.1. National Specialty Groups meet around 3 times/year, some meetings can be teleconferences. All meetings are booked at least two months in advance and members are expected to attend all national Specialty Group meetings (minimum attendance is 2 meetings out of 3, deputies can attend under exceptional circumstances).
- 1.2. It is essential that the national Specialty Groups have a national oversight of the resources which CLRNs are providing to support studies in their portfolio, and for members to provide the Groups with an update of local activity, issues and examples of impact and good practice. Each member should therefore submit a regional report (using the nationally agreed template) to the Coordinating Centre prior to every national Specialty Group meeting (regardless of whether or not attending)
- 1.3. An important role of the national Specialty Groups is to provide input into the feasibility assessments for industry studies and into the adoption process for industry and non-automatically eligible studies. Specialist Adoption Panels have been established for areas which have high volumes of studies and Generic Adoption Panels consider studies which fall within the remit of the other Specialty Group areas. Each member should provide the Coordinating Centre with a short description of their expertise and be willing and able to participate in an appropriate number of feasibility assessments and adoption panels. The number will be dependent upon the volume of studies which are submitted for assessment which fall within the member's expertise. It is important that the workload associated with this activity is shared as equally as possible across the membership of the group and, given that at least two opinions are required for each submission, the number of studies which a member should therefore expect to provide input into is: number of studies falling within remit of Group/number of members on Group multiplied by 2.
- 1.4. Members should bring issues (blocks/barriers) which have arisen locally to the national meetings in order to share these with the other members of the Group and promote an awareness of barriers to research in the specialty with a view to finding resolutions. Members should also share examples of local arrangements which are working well in order to promulgate good practice across the CLRNs.
- 1.5. Members should contribute to national initiatives being taken forward by the national Specialty Group, e.g. the development of communications material, or good practice guides. Where the portfolio of the national Specialty Group is significant, members might also be expected to take a leadership role for part of the portfolio of the national group, or for some specific studies.

## **2. Local Role of Specialty Group Local Lead**

- 2.1. The Specialty Group Local Lead should gain an understanding of the research being undertaken in their specialty across the CLRN. This will involve contacting relevant investigators based within their CLRN.
- 2.2. The Local Lead, working with the CLRN management team, should contribute to raising awareness and an understanding of the NIHR Clinical Research Networks and support systems with the researchers within their specialty.
- 2.3. The Local Lead should instigate, and Chair, meetings of local investigators to promote communications between researchers across their specialty and a collaborative approach to research across the CLRN's member organisations.
- 2.4. The Local Lead should work with Chief Investigators of studies based in their CLRN, emphasising the importance of keeping their study information on the portfolio database accurate and up-to-date and regularly reporting recruitment data; signposting them to sources of support available from their CLRN.
- 2.5. The Local Lead, working with their local CIs and PIs, should identify studies which are failing to meet their recruitment targets, identify the reasons for this and help to resolve local blocks and barriers to recruitment, working with the CLRN management team as required. Issues of a generic nature should be brought to the national meetings of the Specialty Group for discussion and resolution.
- 2.6. The Local Lead should promote growth in the local portfolio by identifying local opportunities, eg unmet capacity and capability, and matching these with opportunities for joining multicentre studies. In addition, locally-led studies which are open to new recruitment sites should be identified and brought to the attention of the national Specialty Group.
- 2.7. The Local Lead should play an active role in the management of the CLRN, working closely with the CLRN management team to ensure that the infrastructure is in place across the CLRN to support recruitment into studies within their specialty. Local Leads should contribute to decisions on resource allocation across the CLRN and the processes for ensuring that funding is being used strategically and for the purposes intended.
- 2.8. The Local Lead should work with their local investigators and CLRN management team to agree targets for recruitment in their specialty and to contribute to the performance management of the CLRN's objectives over the annual planning cycle.
- 2.9. The Local Lead should take the lead in implementing local actions to support national initiatives agreed by the national Specialty Group, eg mapping exercises of local expertise and capacity.

- 2.10. The Local Lead should work with the CLRN's Industry Manager (or equivalent) to provide contacts with relevant PIs within the region and develop and maintain an understanding of the local infrastructure for supporting commercial studies.
- 2.11. The Local Lead, working with the CLRN's management team, should contribute to raising awareness of the importance of working with industry, meeting with relevant local stakeholders to promote the industry agenda.
- 2.12. Although the remit of the national Specialty Groups does not extend to the development of the portfolio, Local Leads may also wish, in a personal capacity, to take the lead in bringing together groups of local researchers to discuss, and develop, grant proposals to develop their local research portfolio.

### **3. CLRN Support for Local Specialty Group Leads**

- 3.1. Specialty Group Leads have important national and local roles to play which are crucial to the success of their CLRN and the CCRN nationally. The CLRN management team should therefore support them in fulfilling their roles effectively by:
  - Arranging regular meetings of all the Specialty Group Leads in order to share experiences, promote consistency of approach, and provide a forum for information sharing.
  - Providing personal/administrative support appropriate to the contribution which the Local Lead is making in terms of the management of the CLRN, the size of the local portfolio and other local challenges, and their personal recruitment into portfolio studies.
  - Ensuring that there are formal mechanisms through which Local Leads can contribute to the management of the CLRN. Such arrangements could include: regular reports and attendance at the CLRN's Executive Group, and/or appointing a member of the Executive who has specific responsibilities for the CLRN's Local Specialty Groups; regular one-to-one meetings between the Local Leads and the CLRN Senior Manager and Clinical Director.
  - Consulting with, and actively seeking input from Local Leads at key points in the CLRN annual planning cycle, eg the business plan and decisions on the use of resources. Local Leads should also be involved in the performance management of the CLRN, working with the management team to actively ensure that resource is linked to recruitment; this may involve the Local Leads being delegated budgets to use strategically to ensure support for their specialty across the CLRN.
  - Providing Local Leads with regular key performance data reports in order to help them take an active oversight of the local portfolio of activity and report to the national Specialty Groups.