

# Terms of Reference

## For members of Versus Arthritis Expert Committees

### Scope and Purpose

Versus Arthritis operates two expert committees, the Research Expert Committee and the Fellowship Expert Committee. The purpose of the committees is to assist the charity in planning, developing and undertaking activities to support research and fellowship awards.

### Terms of reference

The main duties of the Expert Committee members are as follows

- i. To input expertise and insight for their respective areas and provide strategic advice to help the charity plan and prioritise new research and fellowship activities, including our financial investments and influencing activities.
- ii. Consider insight from Versus Arthritis advisory groups and other committees including, but not limited to; the Listening Panel, Research Advisory Groups, Progress Review Committee and sector intelligence.
- iii. To help Versus Arthritis engage and work with others through the identification of strategic partnerships to increase musculoskeletal research capacity in the UK.
- iv. To advise the charity on the balance of research and career activities across the Versus Arthritis portfolio.
- v. To take the role of Chair or Vice-Chair of Versus Arthritis Review Panels as required.
- vi. To help the charity in decision making for other research activities where this is appropriate.

### Delegated authority

The Expert Committees and Review Panels that members oversee, make recommendations to the Charity Executive. The Charity Executive has full delegated authority from the Board of Trustees to authorise funding, within agreed overall policies and procedures and budget, subject to the charity's Schedule of Authority, as may be amended from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

### Membership and procedures

- i. Expert Committees have a core membership. Membership includes people affected by MSK conditions, scientific, clinical, health and research experts as well as and other non-research specialisations including health and social care professionals, policy, public-sector and industry as appropriate and may be supplemented with further expert representation to reflect the specific needs of the Expert Committee activity.
- ii. Unless otherwise stated, Expert Committee members are appointed as individuals with a specific expertise to fulfil the work of the Expert Committee, not as representatives of a particular profession or interest group. Members should make it clear when they declare an organisation's views rather than a personal view.

- iii. Each Expert Committee is co-chaired by a technical individual and a person affected by MSK conditions. Chairs will be appointed by the charity Executive.
- iv. Each Expert Committee comprises 10 to 14 members to accommodate a balanced membership, in line with the needs of the Expert Committee and its level of activity and required expertise.
- v. The Expert Committee may draw on the College of Experts and Patient Insight Network for additional or specific expertise as required.
- vi. Expert Committee member roles are non-remunerated.
- vii. Expert Committee member term of office is three years. An additional term of three years is allowable, such that there is no more than six years of service in charity funding activity, in line with the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) guidance.
- viii. Each Expert Committee will normally hold two meetings per annum.
- ix. The Expert Committees will report to the charity Executive. Such reporting will be for the purposes of making recommendations, providing information and monitoring of research activity and responses to strategic initiatives.
- x. If an Expert Committee member is absent without due notification to the office or the Expert Committee Chairs for three consecutive meetings, then that office would become vacant.

## **Chairs' Responsibilities**

Chairs of Expert Committees have responsibility for:

- i. Ensuring that every member of the Expert Committee has the opportunity to be heard, and that no opinion is ignored or overlooked. That the full range of scientific and lay opinion, including unorthodox and contrary views, are appropriately taken into account, and ensuring that any significant diversity of opinion is fully discussed and, if it cannot be reconciled, is accurately reflected in the minutes.
- ii. The operation and output of the Expert Committee, including ensuring that all decisions are reached impartially and objectively, and that the volume of work does not compromise the rigor of the discussion.
- iii. Ensuring that the proceedings of the Expert Committee are accurately minuted.
- iv. Authorising actions outside the Expert Committee meetings by Chair's action.
- v. Reporting the Expert Committee's activities to the charity Executive via charity personnel.
- vi. Ensure that members act in accordance with the research Code of Conduct.

## **Function and Governance**

- i. Versus Arthritis has secretariat responsibility for the Expert Committees. Responsibilities within this are as follows:
  - a. Management of recruitment to the Expert Committees
  - b. Maintenance of the membership details on Versus Arthritis secure database
  - c. Facilitation of meetings including, venue booking/Teams meeting set up, preparation of agenda and papers, taking minutes of the meetings
  - d. All correspondence with members relating to their memberships.
- ii. Versus Arthritis will work in liaison with the Chair to:

- a. Select members of the Expert Committees
- b. Make termination of membership decisions
- c. Finalise content of agenda and papers
- d. Approve minutes.

The attendance of 50% of members of the Expert Committee including one of the co-chairs will constitute a quorum.