

Clinical Research Network: West Midlands (CRN: WM)

Partnership Group - Terms of Reference

Clinical Research Network
West Midlands

1. Purpose

The group is a formal forum of CRN: WM Partners, constituted by the Host organisation. Its role is to provide active oversight and constructive mutual challenge on CRN plans, activities, performance and reports in order to support the CRN to achieve its objectives and raise the ambitions for clinical research of the CRN Partners.

2. The role of Partners

CRN Partners are organisations that provide NHS services and are in receipt of CRN funding to support NIHR CRN portfolio of research. It is expected that Partners will be either:

- a) Providers of NHS services with substantial levels of research activity, such that the organisation will receive a planned annual allocation of CRN funding; or
- b) Providers of NHS services with relatively low levels of research activity, typically ad hoc or intermittent in nature involving low numbers of patients and/or low numbers of research studies, such as that the organisation will not require a planned annual allocation of CRN funding and instead will be reimbursed as required for costs incurred.

As a condition to receiving CRN funding, and as set out in a contract or Service Level Agreement between the Host organisation and each CRN Partner organisation, CRN Partners are required to support the CRN and the Host in good governance by:-

- Ensuring that they are active within the Partnership Group
- Ensuring that CRN activity and funding in Partner organisations addresses good governance
- Ensuring that any relevant governance or compliance matters, such as research governance or information governance, are properly attended to and details shared with the CRN or the Hosts as appropriate. This will include supporting the Host's internal audit with reviews and investigations.
- Receiving a report from the CRN each year at the Partner organisation's Board, to include details of their local involvement in the CRN via a supplementary report from their CRN Partnership Group member.
- Reviewing and scrutinising CRN business and funding plans, and performance against these, in order to maintain assurance around CRN and Host activities.

3. Role, aims and objectives of the Group

- Reviewing and agreeing CRN business plans and reports, including annual financial and business plans, development plans and the Annual Report
- Informed by financial and activity data, active oversight and constructive mutual challenge of CRN activity and performance, including delivery performance compared to funding allocated, in order to raise ambition and improve performance compared to funding allocated, in order to raise ambition and improve performance in each Partner organisation (or group of organisations of less research active Partners)
- Monitoring any compliances required of Partner organisations

4. Scope of work

4.1 Within scope:

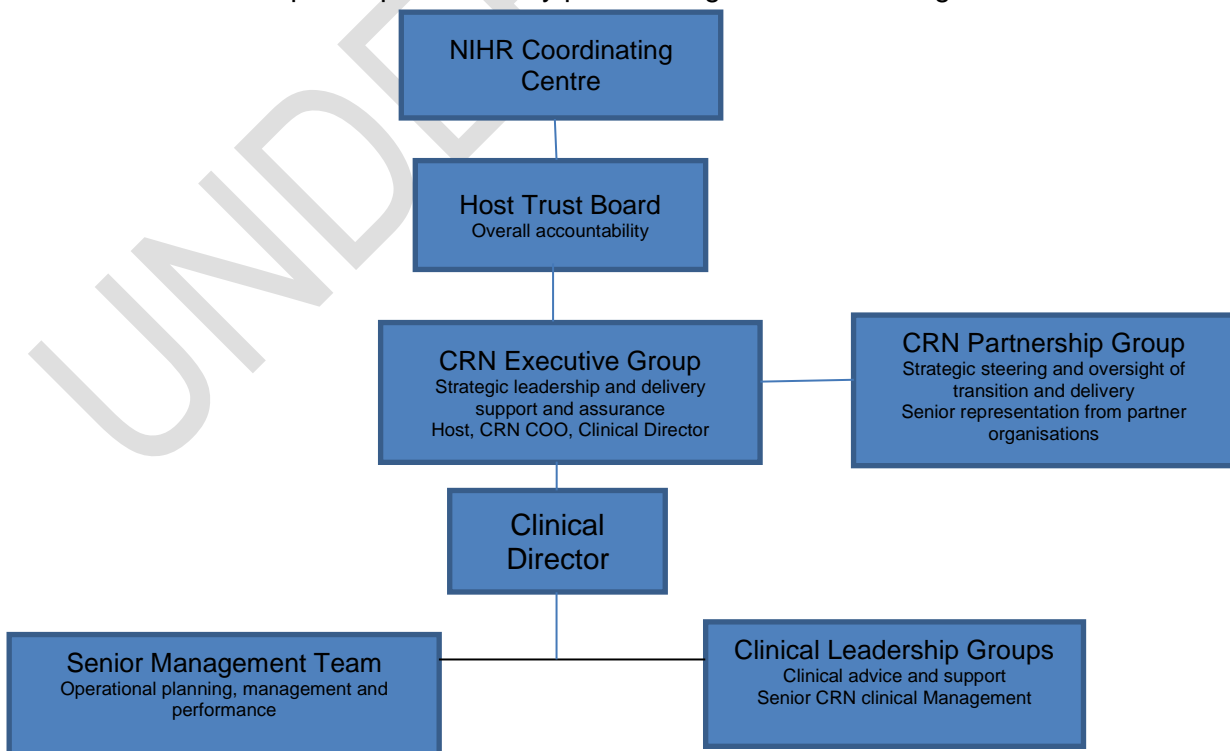
- Oversight, comment and review:
 - To formally review and approve the Annual Plan including the Annual Financial Plan. Any subsequent changes to these plans must also be reviewed and signed-off by the Partnership Group
- Recommendations from the Partnership Group regarding funding decisions are to be put forward to the Host Executive Leadership Group
- Partner organisation delivery against funding requirements (to hold to account and encourage improved performance)
- Overall CRN performance against national network objectives
- Strategic communications with Partner organisations and other key stakeholders, such as the AHSN and neighbouring CRNs
- Structures, models, resources and ways of working across the Network, to support delivery and ensure efficiency and value for money

4.2 Out of scope:

- Non-portfolio studies
- Wider research development (as opposed to research delivery)

5. Governance and accountability

- The Partnership Group forms a key part of the governance arrangements for CRN: WM:



6. Membership

6.1 Group Membership

Non-voting members

- Nominated Chief Executive officer of a Partner organisation (Chair)

Voting members

- Voting Executive Board of Governing Body member of Host organisation
- Voting Executive Board of Governing Body member of each Partner organisation (or group of organisations, as agreed, for those who are less research-active)
- Voting Executive Board of Governing Body member of Commissioning organisations holding contracts with providers of NHS services (by agreement)
- Lay representatives

In attendance

- Other CRN or Partner representatives by invitation, occasionally or as co-opted associates, as required and agreed by the Group
- Patient, carer, public impact on the oversight of the group should be supported through coordination involvement via the agreed function within the CRN and through the lay member

6.2 Deputising Arrangements

- Representatives must have the authority to represent and make decisions on behalf of their organisation in the Partnership Group and should be a voting executive board or governing body member.
- Representation by a non-Board level Director of the organisation is only permissible with formal, written, delegated authority from the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) under the Partner organisation's scheme of delegated authority.
- Representatives may only be deputised for at Group meetings by another colleague with the same level of authority as the representative.
- Members should ensure that they forward papers on to their deputy in good time prior to the meeting and provide a suitable briefing.
- In the event of the Chair being absent, one of the other Partner organisations (but not the Host), will deputise.

6.3 Quoracy

- A meeting will be considered quorate where two thirds of the agreed representatives (or formal nominated deputies) Partner organisations.
- Chair, Clinical Director and COO – 2 of 3 members to be present
- Representative from the Host
- One lay member

- Partner organisations will be expected to attend a minimum of three meetings per financial year, as a condition of receiving CRN funding
- Votes will be taken on key decisions.
- Motions shall be passed by a simple majority of those voting, subject to the requirement for a quorum.
- In the event of a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.

7. Frequency of meetings

- Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis

8. Management and administrative support

- Administrative support to the Group will be provided and will include but not be limited to:
 - Support in preparation of agendas
 - Collation and circulation of papers
 - Minute-taking
 - Scheduling of meetings and venues
 - Communication with Group members

9. Agendas and reporting

- Standing agenda items will include:
 - Declaration of interests
 - Annual financial, delivery and development planning
 - CRN delivery performance against national and local objectives (indicators and highlight reports)
 - Strategic development and engagement
 - Risk management
- All prospective agenda items and required papers should be submitted to the Administrator at least a week prior to each meeting
- Agendas and papers will be circulated a week in advance of each meeting
- Minutes and Actions to be circulated within a week of each meeting taking place

10. Decision-making and conflict resolution

- The Group will aim to work in a collaborative way and reach decisions by consensus.
- Where a member is concerned about a potential agenda item, they should raise this with the Chair prior to the meeting in order to discuss the issue further and seek to resolve concerns, wherever possible.
- All decisions and decision-making rationale will be clearly noted in the minutes.