

# PREDICT – advice for development of a Study Steering Group

## Purpose of the Study Steering Group

The purpose of a research Study Steering Group (SSG) is to oversee the research from its development stage through to completion and publication, providing strategic and operational advice to the Co-ordinating Principal Investigator and core research team. The SG should aim to provide support, guidance, and leverage to give the study an increased chance of success.

Key responsibilities usually include:

- Providing expertise and experience to the design and development of the study protocol.
- Creating an authorship policy prior to the study starting.
- Utilising networks of influence to inform and steer the direction of the study.
- Contributing to decisions about sites to be included.
- Ensuring that the protocol is followed and monitoring recruitment progress.
- Troubleshooting to address problems when they arise.
- Ensuring that the study outputs are delivered.

## Who to include

Aim to include a cross section of people with diverse skills, experience and perspective relevant to the research. The PREDICT Executive can provide advice on potential members to include as required. Consider the following:

- Clinicians with specific interest and expertise in the subject area
- Clinicians and researchers with research design and operations expertise
- A member of the PREDICT Executive (mandatory)
- A further PREDICT member (mandatory)
- A Research Assistant
- Selection of PIs from different hospital settings
- A consumer or end user if relevant to the type of study
- A less experienced early career researcher to mentor

NB. When you first set up the group you may not have determined sites so start with who is available and add other members to the group later on if needed.

## Structure and size of group

Size and structure of the steering group may vary in relation to its stage of development, the type and complexity of the study, and how many sites are involved. PREDICT does not suggest a rigid structure and as mentioned above, the group can be expanded if needed.

We recommend the following:

- Approximately 5 – 8 members – not too large is usually preferable.
- Appoint a chair (usually the CPI)
- You may want to consider how many members need to be present for key decisions and drafting terms of reference for transparency (more applicable to large complex studies).

## Frequency of meetings

Research studies in development often require the SSG to meet more often e.g. 2 weekly until the protocol is developed whilst later during recruitment/data collection less frequent meetings are needed e.g. 2 monthly. Choose a frequency that is appropriate, given the stage of study development. Review this regularly.

- Plan meeting dates and times several months in advance and ideally send out calendar invitations so that it gets into the diary.

- Ideally send out the agenda 1 week to a few days prior as a reminder but also to allow others to add items to the agenda.
- Schedule a follow up meeting if needed to resolve a complex issue.

### **Formalities**

- Ensure the meetings are minuted to capture the essence of what was discussed, decisions made and actions required.
- Circulate the minutes promptly so that SG members can follow up on actions if needed.
- Try and resolve any concerns or complaints in a timely manner to promote a functional group. The PREDICT Executive is available to give advice if needed.
- It is expected that the SG report to the PREDICT executive four times per year with study progress.