

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Equally Well UK Advisory Group is to provide strategic guidance, expert advice, and critical support to Equally Well UK in its mission to improve the physical health and reduce health inequalities of people living with severe mental illness. The group will influence and shape the direction of the campaign and contribute to its effectiveness and impact across the UK.

2. Objectives

The Advisory Group will:

- Provide strategic oversight and advice on the overall direction, priorities, and plans of Equally Well UK
- Act as a critical friend, offering constructive challenge and support to ensure the campaign remains impactful and evidence informed
- Ensure the lived experience of people living with severe mental illness (including carers of people living with severe mental illness) informs all aspects of the campaign.
- Help identify emerging opportunities, risks, and areas for innovation or policy influence
- Support the development and dissemination of key messages, campaigns, and resources
- Champion the work of Equally Well UK within their networks, sectors, and communities
- Strengthen collaboration and partnerships across sectors to achieve shared goals.

3. Membership

Composition

The Advisory Group will include an equal representation of people with living and lived experience of severe mental illness (including carers of people living with severe mental illness) and a diverse range of stakeholders (12 members in total). Stakeholders can include:

- Clinicians and practitioners
- Experts in mental and physical health integration
- Academics and researchers
- Policy makers and system leaders
- Health inequalities and public health specialists.

A maximum of two other members may be co-opted onto the group for a defined time-limited period if they have special knowledge or experience which would be beneficial to the group.

Appointment and Tenure

- Applicants will be invited to express their interest and share insights of their relevant experience
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an informal interview with a panel made up of one person with living or lived experience, one professional practitioner and one member of staff.
- Members will be selected based on their expertise and commitment to the purpose of Equally Well UK
- Membership will be for an initial period of three years. Members can apply in open competition for one further consecutive period of three years.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Members

- Attend and actively participate in meetings (virtual and/or in-person)
- Offer insight, advice, and constructive feedback
- Promote and advocate for the aims and activities of Equally Well UK
- Engage with relevant networks and represent Equally Well UK to amplify impact.

Equally Well UK team / Centre for Mental Health staff

- Facilitate and guide Advisory Group meetings
- Ensure timely circulation of agendas, minutes, and relevant documents
- Act on recommendations from the group as appropriate
- Work closely with the group to set agendas and priorities.

5. Meetings

- The group will meet quarterly (four times per year), with additional meetings scheduled as needed
- Meetings will be held mostly virtually with one in-person meeting per year where possible, depending on circumstances
- Quorum for decisions will be half the membership plus one.

6. Decision-Making and Reporting

- The Advisory Group is non-executive and advisory in nature
- Decisions will be reached by consensus where possible; differing views will be documented and respected

- Key recommendations and discussions will be reported to Equally Well UK's core leadership team at Centre for Mental Health
- The Advisory Group may establish task and finish groups for specific projects.

7. Confidentiality and Conduct

- Members are expected to respect confidentiality and maintain high standards of integrity and professionalism
- Conflicts of interest must be declared and managed appropriately
- The group will operate in accordance with the values of Equally Well UK, including respect, inclusion, co-production, and a commitment to reducing health inequalities.

8. Remuneration

Members with lived and living experience of severe mental illness will be compensated in line with NIHR rates. Meetings will be paid at a half-day rate of £75, which includes preparation and review time. Ad hoc work will be paid at £25 per hour. Members are responsible for managing their own tax and National Insurance contributions. Centre for Mental Health is happy to provide vouchers instead of cash payments if preferable.

Stakeholders will be acting as volunteers and will not be remunerated.

9. Review

These Terms of Reference are intended to evolve with the group's input and will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and effective in guiding Equally Well UK's activities.