Dear Researcher,

Many thanks for your interest in submitting your research project for lay review and input. The following document outlines the background, review process and funding requirements of the panel.

If you are interested in applying, then please submit an application form to:
publicpanel@bashh.org

Background

Organizations that fund research require patient and public involvement (PPI) in projects which they choose to fund. This requirement is based on the knowledge that PPI is key to ensuring the right research questions are being asked; that the conduct of research is patient-focused and that the results of research are communicated to the public and patients in a way that they can understand. Grant application forms include sections where researchers are asked to detail their plans for PPI and trial steering committees often include lay representation.

Whilst funders will often cover costs for PPI, a grant application must be successful before those funds are available. During the application phase, where no funding is available, it is often difficult to involve patients in a meaningful way.

Non-HIV related sexual health research presents a particular challenge for PPI. Most STIs are short illnesses; there are few community groups and the conditions are stigmatized. It is difficult, therefore, to find patient/lay groups to review STI research proposals and to become members of trial steering committees.

This panel aims to help researchers planning and designing sexual health focused research to obtain lay review for their project.

The Panel

The research panel is recruited from the general public. Members undergo and induction programme of online and face-to-face training. They are not research experts, but do understand the conduct of clinical trials and the principals of medical literature review.

Panel Remit and structure:

- To review STI-focused research proposals and produce a short report for researchers.
BASHH/THT Research Panel

- To be a potential source of lay members for study steering committees.
- The panel is co-chaired by the BASHH public panel chair (currently Craig Tipple) and the THT research officer (currently Laura Scott).

The review process:

- The researcher submits a proposal in lay language (max 2 sides A4) and a series of questions (maximum 10) that they would like to be addressed by the panel. This should be accompanied by a glossary of terms (medical or trials specific terminology which may not be well understood).
- Co-chairs review the proposal to ensure it is appropriate for the panel to review.
- If accepted for review, three members of the panel receive the summary and questions by email together with any supporting materials deemed necessary by the co-chairs (this may be supporting papers, a glossary of terms etc).
- The panel have three weeks to review the proposal.
- A web-based workshop is scheduled where the researcher presents the idea and the panel discuss. The researcher (or a member of their team) takes their own minutes of the meeting.
- Minutes circulated to the panel for review. Ratified and then returned to the researcher.

Funding:

- If researchers already have funding for their project, which covers PPI, then the expectation is that the researcher covers the cost of the panel review. For 2017/18, the cost of a review is £225.
- For research proposals which are currently un-funded, the cost of the review will be met by BASHH.
- Researchers who wish to recruit a lay member from panel to their trial steering committee are expected to fund fully the cost of lay involvement.