Research Advisory Committee

Standard operating procedures

**Conflict of Interest:**

Committee members will be asked at the beginning of the meeting to declare any conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

A conflict of interest is a situation in which financial or other personal considerations have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgment and objectivity.

An apparent conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the professional’s judgment is likely to be compromised. A potential conflict of interest involves a situation that may develop into an actual conflict of interest. It is important to note that a conflict of interest exists whether or not decisions are affected by a personal interest; a conflict of interest implies only the potential for bias, not a likelihood.

If a Committee member had a conflict of interest relating to a research project under evaluation (e.g was a co-applicant, had work with an applicant in the last 3 years) they will be asked to leave the room while the Committee is discussing the project and will not be able to vote on the project.

**Peer-reviewers**:

External referees, from amongst academic and clinical professionals in relevant fields, shall be consulted to provide their opinions on research proposals. The anonymity of referees will be maintained with respect to the investigators submitting the proposals.

The external referees shall not attend meetings or have voting rights.

All proposals submitted to the Research Advisory Committee for funding should be reviewed by external peer-reviewers

The number of peer-reviewers per project should be:

* One for a project requesting less than £10,000
* Two for any project requesting more than £10,000.
* A third reviewer if the reviewers give opposing/conflicting recommendations - the third reviewer could be a member of the Committee.

Peer reviewers’ recommendation will be sought using the peer review pro forma in annex that include a disclosure of potential conflict of interest. The reviewers’ recommendations will be communicated to the researchers ahead of the RAC meeting to enable them to respond to the referees’ comments.

**Annex**

**ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR NEURO-DISABILITY**

(Registered Charity No. 205907)

**RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**(RAC)**

Independent Peer Review Report

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project title |  |
| Name of Investigators |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Peer reviewer and position |  |
| Institutional Address |  |
| Area of Expertise |  |

The purpose of the review is to assess whether the proposed research project is of sufficient scientific quality and ethical standard, and appropriate to the needs of people with chronic and complex neurological disabilities, to be carried out.

Please read all the boxes before commenting on the following aspects of the research project described:

**Importance of the problem to be addressed**.

**Research design and appropriateness of the methodology to answer the research question(s).**

Research capacity of the investigators to fulfil the aims and objectives of the proposal.

Adequacy of the time plan

Adequacy of the resources.

# Appropriateness of the work to the needs of people with chronic and complex neurological disabilities.

# Originality and Quality of the research proposed

# Ethical issues and standards

**Other comments**:

**Please include a recommendation for the Committee on the research project**.

Recommendations can be as follows:

Approval: proceed without any revision or with only minor changes.

Approval subject to Amendments: Amendments required. Revise project and resubmit for Chair’s action.

Deferred: Major amendments required and further review following changes.

Reject: Major scientific flaws and poor quality.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Recommendation**: |  |

# Conflict of interest

Due to the specificity of the research carried out at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, we accept that our reviewers can have a conflict of interest due to their involvement with the research proposed, the researcher(s) or the research organisation. We ask our reviewers to disclose the possible conflicts and to indicate whether they affected their review.

A conflict of interest is a situation in which financial or other personal considerations have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgment and objectivity.

An apparent conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the professional’s judgment is likely to be compromised. A potential conflict of interest involves a situation that may develop into an actual conflict of interest. It is important to note that a conflict of interest exists whether or not decisions are affected by a personal interest; a conflict of interest implies only the potential for bias, not a likelihood.

In the context of peer review of research proposals, a conflict of interest might arise, for example, if a reviewer has, or has had in the past, a close working relationship, financial or personal connections with any individual(s) in the academic department(s) or organisation (or any collaborating company or body) from which a proposal originates.  Similarly conflict of interest could arise if the reviewer is employed by the organisation, or carrying our activities on behalf of, the organisation involved. Such interests may be indirect and relate to immediate family members or any other persons living in the same household as the assessor.

A potential conflict of interest does not mean that you should not review this research only that it should be above board as to what that association is.

To the best of your knowledge, do you have a conflict of interest that could be viewed as influencing a decision about this research proposal?

**Yes/No**

# If yes, has it affected in any way your review?

**Thank you very much for your review!**