

NCRI Consumer Scientific Mentoring within the Clinical Studies Groups

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the NCRI consumer mentorship initiative, supporting the consumer participation on the NCRI Clinical Studies Groups (CSGs), and to present the framework for the working relationship between the scientific mentor, as appointed by the consumer's CSG, and the mentee, the consumer.

2. What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is considered a working dynamic between a professional peer (mentor) an individual (mentee), in which the mentor provides support and offers advice, given their insights and knowledge, to the mentee. In a mentorship, the mentor can facilitate personal and professional growth of the mentee through one-to-one guidance. The arrangement can be considered a positive developmental partnership, driven primarily by the mentee, such as 'a guide on the side', offering the mentee a reflective space, determined by their own agenda, in which they receive expertise, guidance and feedback on goals and actions.

3. Aim of Mentoring Within the CSG

Consumers are allocated an experienced and knowledgeable member of the CSG, as their scientific mentor, at the time of appointment to the group and in agreement with the CSG's Chair. The appointment is organised by the consumer administrator. It is expected that any clinical member of the CSG can be appointed as mentor. The NCRI's mentorship programme is part of the wider systematic support to all consumer members on CSGs.

The role of scientific mentor is to support the consumer's educational and professional needs in their membership on the CSG. In this context, there are two aspects to mentoring; first the mentor supports the mentee in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding, so that the mentee can engage with the research agenda. Second, the mentor supports the mentee in being an 'effective' consumer member, such as enabling them to develop an informed 'consumer' perspective and opinion by helping them have a "voice". Scientific mentoring can help mentees build relationships and feel part of the community, develop a comprehensive viewpoint, understand the relevant structures and fully utilise resources.

The role of the mentor and the quality of the mentorship ensures the consumer enjoys and is confident about their role, understands how to work effectively within their role and is aware of

who they can contact for additional professional support. More information on the role profile of consumer can be found [here](#).

The mentorship is guided by the following principles:

- The mentee drives the mentoring agenda
- Engagement is on a voluntary basis for both the mentor and the mentee
- The mentoring relationship is confidential
- Mentoring is non-directive in its approach
- It is a relationship built upon trust and mutual respect
- The mentor empowers the mentee to take responsibility for their own learning
- The relationship places no obligation on either party beyond its developmental intent

4. Responsibilities of the Mentor

Mentors provide individual support, applying their skills and knowledge, to address any obstacles a consumer may face during any point of their tenure. The mentor will also offer a network links and signpost to other agencies or events, as required. For example, a mentor may provide insight into new research developments or offer information about a clinical trial. Other areas of support may include help with scientific terminology and/or research articles. Furthermore, the mentor may support the mentee in developing relationships with other consumers, through introductions and site visits.

The mentor should:

- Regard their role as important
- Practice confidentiality
- Have reasonable expectations
- Be responsive
- Provide guidance
- Be consistent

The responsibilities of the scientific mentor are anticipated to require up to one day (on average), per year, of involvement, in addition to attending CSG meetings.



5. Responsibilities of the Mentee

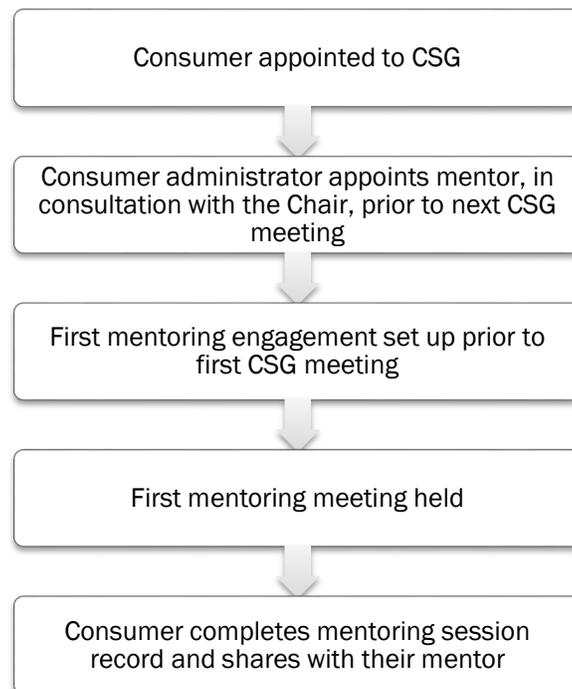
The mentee should be proactive and take responsibility for the mentorship by initiating meeting times, setting agendas, completing and sharing mentoring session records with the mentor, keeping notes on knowledge imparted and following through on advice given by the mentor.

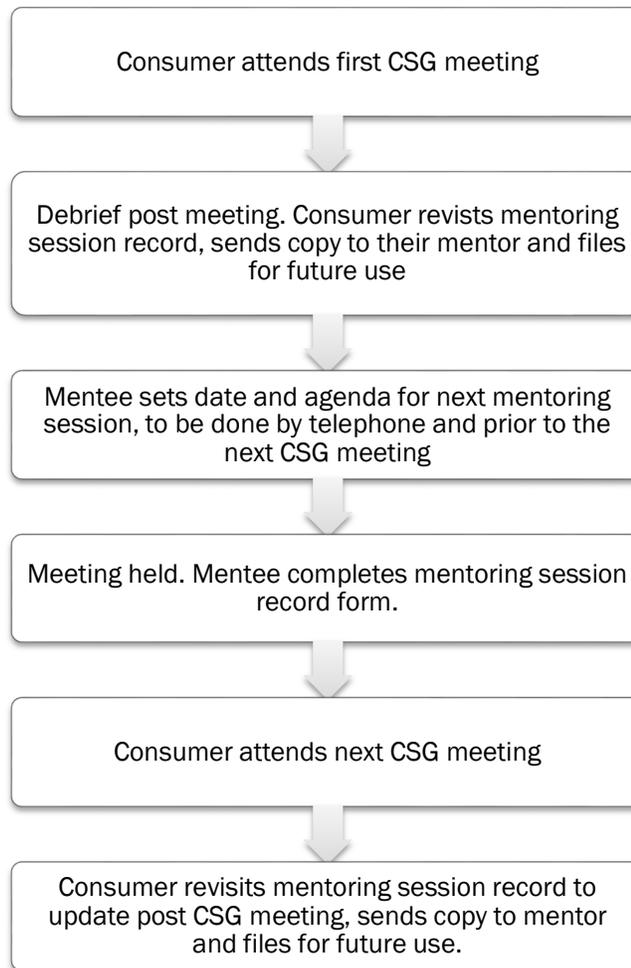
The mentee should:

- Take initiative and ownership of their mentoring
- Practice confidentiality
- Have reasonable expectations
- Listen
- Be responsive
- Communicate needs
- Be honest
- Ask for help if struggling with a particular challenge

6. Mentorship Engagement Structure

The mentoring process of activities is as follows:





First Mentoring Engagement

The mentorship initiates with a one-to-one face-to-face meeting or teleconference between the mentor and mentee. This should occur prior the mentee's attendance of their first CSG meeting, in order to help establish their experience, interests and support needs. The consumer administrator, who organises this first engagement, will contact both parties to find a mutually agreeable time.

A typical agenda will include the following:

- Agreeing and defining the mentorship:
 - Discuss and clarify each other's expectations.
 - Be clear about roles, using this guide as a reference point.
- Frequency of meetings
- The mentee's objectives from this conversation
- What the mentor needs to know for future meeting

- Agree on specific goals and discuss e.g. a good outcome for the first meeting
- Decide actions and timescales
- Establish when the debrief following the first CSG meeting will take place

First Mentorship Engagement Follow-Up

The mentee is strongly encouraged to complete a session record (appendix) following each mentorship engagement, and share it with their mentor. This is a confidential record, which is only for the mentor and mentee to view. Following the mentee's first attendance of a CSG meeting, the mentor and mentee should debrief to discuss the session record, in reflection of the mentee's experiences at the meeting and whether the record fully addresses their needs. The mentee should organise this discussion and then update session record. This form is copied to the mentor and filed for future use.

Subsequent mentoring engagement

Following the attendance of the CSG meeting, the mentoring process continues with subsequent mentoring engagement. Structured meetings between the mentor and the mentee, as organised mutually by the mentee and mentor, should be arranged prior to each CSG meeting, as required. Such arrangements should be driven by the mentee, in order that their needs and overall objectives are met, and to give them an opportunity to consider their agenda item for the CSG meeting. As with the initial meeting, outcomes of mentoring discussions should be recorded on the mentoring session record by the mentee, and a copy given to the mentor. The session record should be retained, for the purpose of identifying educational needs of consumers on NCRI CSGs and mentoring surveys.

7. Mentoring Styles

There are a number of styles that a mentor may adopt, which may be a preferred style or may adopt a combined approach, to meeting the needs of the mentee. It can be useful to experiment with these role styles and to consider their impact. The following three styles incorporate different approaches to mentoring¹:

- *The Guide*: explaining how and why, creating opportunities to learn, sign post for more information
- *The Challenger*: making waves; challenging, stimulating, questioning, probing
- *The Role Model*: unseen, largely unfelt. The mentee consciously adopts aspects of the mentor's thinking behaviours and style



Possible question themes include:

- *Confirming*: building on the mentee's beliefs and values e.g. What makes you think that?
- *Challenging*: questioning values, beliefs and assumptions e.g. What's at play here?
- *Probing*: assertive, creating insight e.g. What were you thinking about when you said ...?
- *Testing*: drawing together, setting boundaries, creating confidence e.g. What would that look like?

Reflection

Encouraging reflective practice is key to the mentorship. The following questions can be used by the mentor encourage reflection:

- Something that my mentee does really well is:
- An example (such as behaviours and/or actions) of when he or she did this is:
- What this demonstrates about him or her is:
- Something that my mentee could improve upon is:
- An example (such as behaviour and/or actions) of when he or she did this is:
- How this impacts me/others is:

For the mentee, it is recommended to focus on listening and consider the advice imparted by the mentor. Certain questions can help the mentor gain clarification over advice, for example:

- What are two things that I'm doing particularly well?
- What is the one area that I could improve?

The mentee may reflect on the following:

- What did I hear that particularly resonated with me?
- What did I hear that was surprising or challenging to me?
- What will I do with this new knowledge in the future?
- How did these conversations make me feel?
- What did I not understand that meant I was unable to contribute to a discussion effectively?

Don't forget to thank the mentor for their time and insight.

8. Mentorship Term and Evaluation

During the mentorship, time will be given to reflect on the mentoring process. This evaluation process will be prompted by the following: issues raised in the mentoring record the mentorship coming to an end, mentorship support no longer required, or due to the mentee leaving their CSG.



During the mentorship evaluation, session records should be reviewed and the following questions addressed:

- How valuable was the mentoring process for both the mentee and the mentor?
- What was achieved that wouldn't have been achieved without mentoring?
- What are the top notes that resonated through the process?
- How could the process be improved?

Under the circumstances of the mentor-mentee relationship not fully functioning, whereby the arrangement may not appear to benefit the learning outcomes or contributions of the mentee to their consumer role, or if either mentee or mentor is not satisfied with the arrangement, the mentor and/or mentee should notify the CSG Chair. Given this, an alternate mentor can be allocated to the mentee.

9. Concluding Remarks

Any concerns/issues of mentoring should be raised in the first instance with the consumer administrator and CSG Chair.

If you have any questions regarding the mentorship, please contact the consumer administrator Natalie Salhov (tel: 020 3469 8600, natalie.salhov@ncri.org.uk).

References

1. Darling (1984) cited by Gopee, N. 2015, *Mentoring and Supervision in Healthcare*, 3rd Edition. London: Sage Publications.

Appendix

Mentoring session record		Date:	
This is a confidential document to be shared by the mentee with their mentor			
Mentor:		Mentee:	
Topic of Session			
Goal of Session			
Agreed Actions			
Initial impression of the success of this session:			
What went well:			
Was anything unhelpful?:			
The learning I will take from this session:			
What I want to focus on before my next session:			
Useful contacts/resources e.g. a link to a trial, a glossary			

