

Service User Led Participation and Research Collaborative (SPARC) Research advisory group: Guidance for Researchers

SPARC is a partnership between ELFT and NELFT that brings together people with lived experience, carers and staff to help shape, improve and influence research. SPARC includes two sub groups, offering different ways for members to get involved depending on their interests and experience. You can read more about these on our webpage [here](#). SPARC's research advisory group can provide valuable feedback at all stages of a project, including research ideas, study design, ethics, participant materials, recruitment strategies, data collection methods, interpretation of findings and dissemination plans. Researchers are encouraged to use this opportunity to gain meaningful lived experience perspectives that can strengthen the quality, relevance and impact of their work.

The SPARC Research Advisory Group hosts a monthly panel where researchers can present to the panel and seek advice. This guidance has been developed to support researchers presenting to the research advisory group.

Presenting your research to SPARC

1. To submit your request to present to the group please email Emma Medlicott at emma.medlicott1@nhs.net. Meetings take place once a month and we ask for requests to be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the meeting. Confirmation of an agreed slot will be sent to you prior by email. Meeting dates and times can be found on our website [here](#).
2. Presentations should be brief and focused, lasting approximately 10 minutes, followed by discussion and feedback from SPARC members. Researchers should submit a one page summary at least one week before the meeting, which will be shared with the group in advance. Presentations should provide an overview of the project, including its rationale, aims, methods, planned analysis, dissemination plans, and details about the project team or service involved. Researchers should also identify any specific questions on which they would like SPARC's input.
3. Researchers should explain why the project is important, the problem it aims to address, and how it could benefit service users, carers, staff or the wider community.
4. Researchers should describe how the project has been designed to be inclusive and accessible, and be prepared to discuss this further with SPARC members during the meeting.
5. Researchers should outline how people with lived experience have been involved in the project to date, or how they intend to involve people with lived experience as the project develops.
6. Presentations should use clear, accessible language wherever possible. Any technical terminology, research jargon or acronyms should be explained to support understanding and meaningful discussion.
7. Researchers are encouraged to use images, diagrams, examples or other visual aids where appropriate to help communicate key information about the project.
8. Questions, comments and discussion are welcomed throughout the presentation. Researchers are encouraged to engage openly with SPARC members and view the session as an opportunity for collaborative discussion.

9. Researchers are encouraged to make note of key feedback, reflections and suggestions shared by members during the discussion.
10. Where possible, researchers should provide feedback on how SPARC's input has influenced their project. Updates on project progress and outcomes are also welcomed and help demonstrate the impact of the group's involvement.
11. SPARC members bring a wide range of skills, expertise and lived experience. Researchers may wish to explore opportunities for further involvement and support beyond the panel meeting and are encouraged to get in touch if this would be beneficial to their project.
12. Any personal experiences shared by SPARC members during discussions should be treated as confidential. Researchers may draw on general themes arising from discussions but should not share any identifiable information.
13. Some projects may involve potentially sensitive topics. Researchers are asked to provide an appropriate warning at the start of their presentation where this is relevant.
14. SPARC values the diverse experiences, perspectives and expertise of its members. Researchers and members are encouraged to share views openly, listen to different perspectives and contribute to discussions in a respectful, supportive and inclusive manner.