

# Lived experience panel handbook and policies

*The SSA is seeking to establish a panel of people with lived and living experience of addictive products and behaviours. This is to ensure that the experiences of people affected by addictive products and behaviours inform the SSA's strategic and operational decisions. By doing so, the Society will be able to increase its impact and relevance in the field whilst supporting people with lived and living experience to contribute to the Society's working groups, subcommittees, and Board of Trustees.*

## Panellist role description

Panellists will be required to attend online meetings. These will be three times per year for the full panel and once every four to six weeks for the subcommittee meetings. The role will involve the following:

- Reading papers ahead of meetings
  - Identifying issues where people with lived experience of addiction can contribute
  - Seeking information and advice from other panellists where issues are outside of your area of expertise/experience
  - Sending apologies along with any notes that are relevant if you are unable to attend the meeting
- Representing your own views within meetings
- Representing the views of the lived experience panel within meetings (and being clear when you are presenting your own views and those of the panel)
- Keeping the lived experience panel up to date on discussions and decisions relating to the subcommittee.
- Providing information to the panel or subcommittee as requested and agreed (following the guidelines on payments detailed in *Appendix 1*)
- Retaining the confidentiality of discussions held within subcommittees where information may be personally, financially, or legally sensitive

## Chair and Vice Chair roles

One member of the panel will be selected to act as Chair and a second member to act as Vice Chair.

The Chair will be responsible for the following:

- Preparing the agenda for the panel meetings
- Chairing meetings of the lived and experience panel, ensuring all issues are discussed and the meeting runs to time
- Representing the views of the panel at SSA Board of Trustee meetings
- Collecting feedback from representatives of the subcommittees
- Liaising with the SSA operations team to ensure smooth running of the panel
- Acting as a point of contact for members of the panel

The Vice Chair will, in effect, deputise for the Chair, covering the role in that person's absence and supporting them to coordinate meetings and actions. They must be able to take on responsibility for the above on an ad-hoc basis.

## **Selection**

Members of the panel will be able to nominate themselves for the role of Chair and Vice Chair. The initial Chair and Vice Chair will be selected by the SSA lived experience task and finish group, subsequent chairs will be voted for by the panel.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the panel and will remain in post for one year, after which they must be re-elected to the role if they wish to continue. A person on the panel may be Chair or Vice Chair for a maximum of three years.

The Society retains the right to remove the Chair if that person ceases to act in the best interests of the Society or is unable to fulfil their commitments. In this case, the role will be taken up by the Vice Chair with immediate effect until a new election can be arranged.

## **Agenda**

The Chair and Vice Chair will review and amend the agenda for panel meetings, in discussion with the SSA's senior management team to ensure the Society's priorities and those of the panel are given space for discussion and voting where required.

The following items should always be on the agenda:

- Apologies for absence
- Previous minutes and progress on agreed actions
- Declarations of interest
- Reports/summaries/questions from the subcommittees
- Board meeting agenda items
- Agreed actions
- Date of next meeting

The SSA will provide informal training for the Chair and Vice Chair and will support external structured training as relevant to the roles.

The SSA will provide administrative support to the meeting in the form of:

- setting up online meetings
- circulating papers and agendas in advance
- other support for the lived experience chair and vice-chair roles

## **Selection of panellists and term of membership**

People with lived or living experience of addiction will be able to apply to join the panel using an online application form and by providing information on the following:

- Name
- Short biographical information (including information on work and volunteering roles)
- Information on whether they are an affected other (e.g. a carer or family member) or have direct lived experience of addiction
- Areas of experience and interest (e.g. drugs, alcohol, gambling, caring)
- Why they want to join the panel
- Previous experience on panels, advisory boards, committees, or groups of a similar nature
- Any potential or existing conflicts of interest

- Personal information including ethnicity and other protected characteristics

The initial panel will be selected by the lived experience task and finish group, with future membership applications reviewed and agreed by the panel itself, with support from SSA operations staff.

To be eligible, people must meet the following criteria:

- lived or living experience of addiction (including experience as a carer or relative of an affected other)
- able to attend regular online meetings
- able to commit to attending monthly subcommittee meetings and longer full-panel meetings three times per year
- UK-based

Panellists do not need to be abstinent or in recovery to join the panel. Panellists do, however, need to be able to commit to attending and contributing to meetings without appearing intoxicated.

People who are employed by, or who otherwise receive money or funding from an unhealthy commodity industry organisation (such as gambling, alcohol, recreational cannabis, tobacco or non-pharmaceutical nicotine (e.g. vaping)) will not be eligible for membership of the panel.

People currently sitting on panels funded by unhealthy commodity industry organisations will not be eligible. Please state on your application form if you have sat on a panel within the past year. Please declare if you have been involved with panels that receive indirect funding from unhealthy commodity industry (e.g., GambleAware).

All panellists will be subject to a maximum term of two years after which they must re-apply to join the panel. Panellists may serve a maximum of two terms on the panel after which they will be required to stand down.

Where applications exceed the available spaces, the lived experience will prioritise people in a way that ensures the panel retains a diverse range of voices (substance, background etc). Where people are not selected, we may ask to keep their details on record so we can approach them when a place does become available.

Any panellist missing three or more full panel meetings in a row will normally be taken off the panel unless exceptional circumstances are agreed with and documented by the Chair.

## **Panel quorum**

If the number of panellists falls below ten, due to mid-term-vacancies, and if more than six months remain until the end of the current panellists' terms, the panel will seek to recruit panellists to bring the number on the panel to ten or more. This may be done by approaching previous volunteers who were not accepted (where they have given consent for their details to be held for this purpose), or by an ad hoc open recruitment round (or both.)

## **Schedule of meetings**

The full lived experience panel will meet three times each year approximately two to four weeks before the SSA's Board of Trustee meetings, which are usually in March, July, and November. The panel will be given a copy of the board agenda and any relevant papers. The agenda and papers may

be redacted or withheld where they are confidential or financially sensitive in nature. This might include information on SSA staffing issues (such as disciplinarys) and/or legally sensitive information.

The panel will identify at least one named person to attend each of the following SSA subcommittees. That person should represent the views of the lived experience panel as well as their own. They should work to maintain clarity between the two positions – stating clearly when the views are shared or individual. Panellists will be full members of these subcommittees with the same participation rights and responsibilities as all other attendees.

Current subcommittees include the following:

- Conflicts of interest
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Funding schemes innovation
- Governance
- Lived experience
- Communications and events

## **Conflicts of interest**

We ask that all people who work with the SSA declare any real or potential conflicts of interest. These generally fall into one of two categories.

### *Personal financial interests*

This relates to situations where you may be in a position within the SSA to recommend a course of action from which you will personally benefit. For example, if the SSA was looking for a place to hold a conference, and you owned a venue, you would have a financial incentive to persuade the SSA to use your venue. This would make you less able to offer independent advice to the SSA and would constitute a conflict of interest.

### *Ethical conflicts relating to addictive products industry funding*

This is where you may have received funding from a company or organisation that derives income from harmful products or from harmful products industry. For example, you may be excluded from working with the SSA if you have been paid by a gambling company or a recreational cannabis manufacturer for research, work, or PPI initiatives.

If you are unsure what constitutes a conflict of interest, please ask a member of the SSA staff or an SSA trustee for guidance. Withholding information about a potential conflict could risk your place on the panel and undermine the panel's guidance to the SSA.

Further information is available on request from [enquires@addiction-ssa.org](mailto:enquires@addiction-ssa.org).

## **Complaints procedure**

If you have a complaint, you should discuss this with the Chair of the panel in the first instance and seek to resolve the issue on an informal basis. If you are uncomfortable talking to the Chair then you should approach the Chief Executive Officer or an appropriate trustee (i.e. one who works with the panel). If these attempts to resolve the issue do not work, you may consider lodging a formal complaint.

A formal complaint should be written and should outline the nature of the complaint and the full details that relate to it. This should be given to the Chief Executive Officer or another SSA trustee if you do not feel comfortable giving this to the Chief Executive Officer. You will then be invited to a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer and at least one other trustee where you can discuss the details of your complaint. You may choose to be accompanied by another member of the lived experience panel, a family member, or someone else you choose who can support you. You should, however, inform the Society of who you will bring with you to any such meeting.

Following the meeting, there may be a request for more information. Depending on the nature of this, a timescale will be set by which point the Society will provide you with a formal/written response that will contain any decisions made and any action that has been taken or that will be taken as a result of your complaint.

## Appendix 1: Expenses

### What this policy covers

This policy applies to members of the SSA lived experience panel.

This outlines the Society's policy on the authorisation, pre-payment and reimbursement of expenses incurred during the course of your membership of the panel.

The Society reserves the right to refuse to pay an expense claim if the expenditure is deemed by the Society to be unreasonable or unnecessary, or if the appropriate documentation has not been provided.

### Your entitlements and responsibilities

It is the policy of the Society to offer claimants full reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred on the Society's behalf, providing that the nature of these expenses has been agreed in advance.

All claims must be submitted within one month of the expenditure being incurred.

Consideration must always be given to using the most cost-effective method of travel. Standard class train travel, for example, will be refunded unless a documented medical need for first or business class travel is provided. The Society is a charity and claimants are expected to keep expenses to a minimum.

Payment for attending meetings as a representative of the SSA's lived experience panel follow guidance from the NIHR detailed [here](#).

For most one hour meetings, members of the panel will be paid £55 to cover the time at the meeting and the time required to prepare. Payments above this (e.g. for extra work that is required) should be agreed in advance and will follow the below schedule:

- £13.80: For involvement in a task or activity such as reading and commenting on an abstract which equates to less than half an hour. For example, reviewing papers for the development of Alerts.
- £27.50: For involvement in a task or activity requiring little or no preparation and which equates to approximately one hour of activity or less. For example, participating in a focus group to provide feedback on a proposal.
- £55: For involvement in a task or activity likely to require some preparation and which equates to approximately two hours of activity. For example, a teleconference with related papers to read or review a few short documents. This would cover most 1hr meetings that require preparation.
- £82.50: For involvement in a task or activity where preparation is required and which equates to approximately half a day's activity. For example, participating in a meeting to interview a small number of candidates who have applied to join a committee or panel, participating in a focus group, or delivering training.
- £165: For involvement in all-day meetings. For example, attending a committee or panel meeting as an observer prior to becoming an active public member of a committee/panel.
- £330: For involvement in all-day meetings that require substantial preparation. For example, when chairing or co-chairing a meeting or when carrying out other discretionary work, which requires additional responsibilities.

Members of the panel should claim these expenses by completing the invoice below and sending this to [rob@addiction-ssa.org](mailto:rob@addiction-ssa.org). The SSA can, where required, pay for travel and accommodation in advance using the society debit cards. You may still be required to provide receipts. Please note, you may not be eligible to claim for any delays or cancellations if this option is used.

The Society will hold receipts for all claims for at least six years as required by the Inland Revenue.

The Society will pay the following expenses – in-line with the policy on staff and trustee expenses:

- petrol/mileage costs incurred whilst on Society business
- travel from home to and from the place of a meeting and any additional travel necessary in the course of your membership of the SSA's lived experience panel.
- meals taken while on SSA business, subject to a minimum time commitment of four hours, an upper limit of payment of £30 per person and arrangements for the provision of meals during the Society business.
- accommodation costs if overnight stays are necessary to the activity undertaken on behalf of the Society.

In these cases, it is not acceptable to claim sums above the level of out-of-pocket expenses. Claims for travel not actually taken or food not actually consumed is fraudulent and defrauding the Society.

Costs incurred by travelling companions not engaged in official Society business will not usually be paid by the Society. There are, however, instances where you may require assistance in order to travel, for example the need for a registered carer. In these cases, the Society may cover those costs where evidence of need for a carer is provided.

The Society may also, in some cases, provide financial support for childcare provision where required. Where expenses are incurred in foreign currencies, the amounts should be shown with the currency in question clearly indicated. Reimbursement will be made in Sterling at the rate of exchange in force on the date of the claim.

## Appendix 2: Expenses claim form

Please email the below to [rob@addiction-ssa.org](mailto:rob@addiction-ssa.org)

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Payment details - UK banks only</b>	
Account name	
Bank account number	
Bank sort code	
<b>Email address:</b>	
<b>In attendance as:</b>	

<b>Meeting Subcommittee, date(s), length, preparation</b>	<b>Code (see below)</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Total:</b>		
<b>Signature of claimant:</b>		
<b>Authorising Signature (subcommittee chair or minute-taker):</b>		

<b>Code</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Description</b>
A	£13.80	For involvement in a task or activity such as reading and commenting on an abstract which equates to less than half an hour. For example, reviewing papers for the development of Alerts.
B	£27.50	For involvement in a task or activity requiring little or no preparation and which equates to approximately one hour of activity or less. For example, participating in a focus group to provide feedback on a proposal.
C	£55	For involvement in a task or activity likely to require some preparation and which equates to approximately two hours of activity. For example, a teleconference with related papers to read or review a few short documents.
D	£82.50	For involvement in a task or activity where preparation is required and which equates to approximately half a day's activity. For example, participating in a meeting to interview a small number of candidates who have applied to join a committee or panel, participating in a focus group, or delivering training.
E	£165	For involvement in all-day meetings. For example, attending a committee or panel meeting as an observer prior to becoming an active public member of a committee/panel.
F	£330	For involvement in all-day meetings that require substantial preparation. For example, when chairing or co-chairing a meeting or when carrying out other discretionary work, which requires additional responsibilities.