

**Although the format and style of each PPG will likely be different, all PPGs should have a Chair and a Secretary. Some may also have a Treasurer, and alongside this there could be any number of other roles specific to your group alone.**

### **Role of the Chair**

The main role of the Chair is to manage meetings and make sure they run smoothly and fairly in order to make sure decisions can be made. This makes it much easier for your group to get things done.

It is important to remember that the Chair of your group has no more power than any other member, and it is up to the group as a whole to select a person to be Chair.

Other features of the role can vary depending on the personality and experience of the Chair and the make-up and functioning of your group. It could be part of the Chair's role to represent your group at Patient Neighbourhood Group events, or this could be any other member. It is important that your group as a whole agrees what they expect the Chair to do and that they are comfortable with this.

Before a meeting, the Chair should help the Secretary put together an agenda. It is a good idea for the Chair to:

- Make sure they know about each item to be discussed at the meeting.
- Work out how much time will be needed to cover each item on the agenda and try not to let the discussion of each item go over that time.
- Decide what result is needed from each item on the agenda. Some actions will just need a discussion, but some will need action taking or a decision to be made.

During the meeting, it is important that the Chair makes sure it runs smoothly and fairly. They can do this by:

- Sticking to the meeting agenda and being aware of time, so that everything that needs to be discussed at the meeting is covered and all decisions are made without the meeting overrunning its planned finishing time.
- Always aim to be open-minded, fair and impartial, never letting their own views on a subject, organisation or person affect how they run the meeting.
- Make sure everyone who wants to gets the opportunity to speak and play an equal part in any decisions made. No one person, in particular the Chair, should dominate the discussions.
- Keep good order and make sure everyone can hear what other people have to say.
- Helping to sort out conflicts and differences of opinion.
- Sum up any important points or decisions as they are made - this helps the person taking the minutes.
- Make sure people have done things they agreed to do at earlier meetings.

## Role of the Secretary

The Secretary is another role that can differ from group to group. However, all Secretaries should aim to keep people – members of your group and non-members - informed about your group and its activities, keep group records and act as a point of contact for people wanting to get in touch with your group.

The Secretary is responsible for the smooth running of the group. Their responsibilities may include to:

- Book the room for any meetings and arrange any refreshments
- Work with the Chair to put together a meeting agenda
- Make sure everyone invited to the meeting know when and where it is going to take place and what will be discussed
- Make sure any documents (such as copies of the meeting agenda, minutes of previous meeting and any documents that are to be discussed) are distributed well in advance of that meeting. This could be done easily via a virtual group, or through e mail

During the meeting the Secretary should:

- Make a record of who has attended the meeting.
- Take notes (or minutes) of the meeting. These notes should not try to record everything that has been said at the meeting, but should rather concentrate on recording any decisions made and who is going to do what.

After the meeting the Secretary should:

- Write or type up the notes of the meeting and ensure that they are posted to the group so that any members who weren't at the meeting can access them. It is a good idea to do this as soon as possible after a meeting, while what was said is still fresh in your mind.
- Make sure copies of the notes are available for the next meeting.
- File the meeting notes for future reference.

The Secretary should also:

- Deal with membership applications and keep group membership records up to date. This can be as simple as a list of the names and addresses of all group members.
- Keep the group informed about what letters and emails the group has received
- Write letters on behalf of the group and keep group members informed about what letters have been sent out on the group's behalf.
- Ensure that any virtual groups are kept up to date with any decisions, events, actions and minutes.

The varying roles of the Secretary mean that it could be split amongst a number of different people. This is often a good idea as it stops one person being overloaded with work and involves more people in the running of your group. You could have officers who are not mentioned in this guide, including:

- General Secretary
- Online Secretary
- Events Secretary
- Minutes Secretary