

In LCRN Eastern, the Novavax study team have taken an unusual approach for an adoption site and are setting up their own local Public and Participant Panel to act as a reference group for the study. The need for a Public and Participant Panel has arisen from:

- A need to engage more people from BAME communities to take part in COVID-19 vaccines research
- A need to act on study feedback from Novavax participants received via the Participant in Research Experience Survey (PRES)
- A recognition that due to the logistical nature of the local Trial Management Group (TMG) meetings, meaningful involvement of the public and participants would be better served by having a separate group rather than adding public contributors to the TMG

The first step has been the setup of an internal Working Group which includes:

- Local PI for Novavax
- PPIE Lead from LCRN Eastern
- Research Nurse

The main focus for the Working Group is to establish the Public and Participants Panel, which will sit in parallel to and will have regular two-way engagement with the TMG. While the Panel won't be able to influence the overall study at a national/global level, they will be able to inform some aspects of local delivery that wouldn't require a study amendment or ethical approval. In particular, the Panel will look at feedback from Novavax participants received via PRES to address issues raised there (e.g. a patient flyer providing additional information about self-swabbing or common questions and answers on use of the study app). The Working Group is also in the process of developing a toolkit to support staff with engagement with people from BAME communities.

### **Engagement:**

The Working Group has developed a role description and terms of reference for the Panel and has approached local staff networks to take part, which includes non-clinical staff who are also from BAME communities. Staff networks have been really positive about the opportunity to support this and staff will be reimbursed £25 (in line with CRN reimbursement rates) to cover their time to participate in the Panel. The Panel will also look to recruit from local Research Champions, Novavax study participants and via local community groups and leaders.

### **Learnings so far:**

- Having the study PI on board from the outset has really helped drive this project forward and get the necessary buy-in
- Trust staff networks are a good first port of call to engage people with non-clinical backgrounds but who also have their own community networks
- Staff engagement has been helped by this being seen as a positive opportunity to get involved rather than a request to help address a problem, and by reimbursing people for their time to take part
- Having a member of the PPI Team on the working group has helped with getting participant feedback on PRES on the study team agenda for consideration

### **Resources available to share:**

- [Role description for Public and Participant Panel](#)
- [Terms of reference for Public and Participant Panel](#)
- [PRES feedback sheet](#)

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