



## The Gastroenterology Audit and Research Network

### East Midlands Trainees (EMiT)

## CONSTITUTION

### 1. MISSION

*...to plan and deliver high quality, trainee-led, collaborative, multi-centre audit and research in gastroenterology and hepatology for the benefit of current and future patients*

### 2. AIMS

- 2.1. Establish an open network of interested gastroenterology registrars, doctors, medical students and other professionals across the East Midlands region (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland).
- 2.2. Facilitate trainees to propose, design and refine, and deliver multi-centre audit and research projects with a high potential for making an impact.
- 2.3. Put a collaborative spirit at the core of the GARNet, ensuring that the contributions of the membership and associates are recognised through a transparent process.
- 2.4. Provide continuity so that members can continue their involvement in audit and research projects as they move around the region.
- 2.5. Provide training and direct members to resources that extend their involvement, experience and competence in audit, research and quality improvement.
- 2.6. Undertake or facilitate activities that promote and help to deliver the wider regional and national research agenda, including but not limited to collaboration with other trainee-led collaboratives and with NIHR Clinical Research Networks.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1. The GARNet shall have a membership.
- 3.2. All higher specialty trainees in gastroenterology in the East Midlands are automatically considered to be Members (without any obligation to make payment in relation thereto) unless they wish otherwise. This category includes those with LAT appointments.
- 3.3. Other trainees and doctors including those in other affiliated specialties, medical students, allied health professionals and academics may also apply to an Officer to become Associate Members. This category includes those with LAS or other locum appointments.
- 3.4. Consultants are elected to become Honorary Members by a simple majority of Officers or by a simple majority of Members at a General Meeting.
- 3.5. Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members must sign Form 1 (GARNet membership and authorship declaration) to stand for election as an Officer, to serve as a Committee Member, to fully participate in a Study Team and/or to be eligible for authorship.
- 3.6. A current list of Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members shall be maintained on behalf of the GARNet by the Secretary. Any new members, resignations or terminations shall be properly recorded.

- 3.7. Data on the membership shall not be distributed external to the GARNet. Confidential and Form 1 records shall be kept securely by the Secretary and kept confidential to the Officers.
- 3.8. Doctors in training may only remain Members until the date of their CCT in Gastroenterology and/or Hepatology. Membership as an Associate Member or Honorary Member as appropriate is still open at the discretion of the Officers.
- 3.9. Membership of the GARNet may be terminated if a two-thirds majority of Officers (rounded to the closest integer) believe it is in the best interests of the GARNet or automatically following: (a) breach of authorship agreement, (b) breach of research governance principles in accordance with Good Clinical Practice guidelines, (c) breach of data protection principles, (d) breach of ethical principles, (e) fraudulent use or omission of data, (f) resignation or removal of the Member from a recognised training post, (g) a permanent move of the Member to another region. Membership as an Associate Member is still open under (g) at the discretion of the Officers. The Member has the right to be heard in person by the Officers before the decision is made. There is no right to be accompanied or represented at any such hearing save where the Officers permit the same in their complete discretion. The Officers' decision is final.

#### **4. MEETINGS AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- 4.1. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held every year. An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) shall be held if: (a) it is necessary to change the Constitution, (b) it is necessary to wind up the GARNet, (c) the Secretary on behalf of the Officers receives a written or email request from a simple majority of Members, (d) it is voted for by a two-thirds majority of Officers (rounded to the closest integer).
- 4.2. At least fourteen days' written or email notice shall be given to all Members. Ideally General Meetings shall be scheduled during or alongside regional training days.
- 4.3. An Agenda shall be circulated to all Members at least seven days prior to the General Meeting. Members can submit an Agenda item by contacting the Secretary at least ten days prior to the General Meeting. Alternatively, additional business may be raised by a Member for discussion at the General Meeting.
- 4.4. There shall be at least five Members, or at least one tenth of Members (rounded to the closest integer), whichever is fewer for the General Meeting to be considered quorate.
- 4.5. Other individuals may attend the General Meeting at the discretion of the Officers or if this is supported by a simple majority of Members.
- 4.6. The General Meeting shall usually be chaired by the current Chair of the GARNet or another Officer nominated by the Chair to deputise. If necessary, the Members may nominate an individual to chair the General Meeting by simple majority.
- 4.7. An attendance list of Members and other individuals present at the General Meeting shall be taken by the Secretary or another nominated Officer and included in the Minutes.
- 4.8. Minutes shall be kept of the General Meeting by the Secretary or another nominated Officer, and made available to Members and retained for at least three years thereafter.
- 4.9. Every Member (but not Associate Member or Honorary Member) has a single non-transferable vote which may be exercised by proxy with the prior consent of the Secretary (on behalf of the Officers) or another nominated Officer.
- 4.10. Members shall elect five Officers to serve until the next AGM (approximately a 12-month term). Any Member who has signed Form 1 may stand for election as an Officer. For each of the roles, a Member may be elected unopposed or by unanimous acclamation, otherwise a simple majority in an anonymous secret ballot is required. Voting slips shall be counted

openly by the Chair or nominated Member. In the event of a tied ballot, the election of that role shall be re-run concurrently at the AGM or if necessary by an email vote of all Members overseen by two Members nominated at the AGM (usually to include the Secretary or another nominated Officer). A Member may only occupy one Officer role per 12-month term. Officers shall serve for one term with possible renewal, subject to re-election, for up to two further terms.

- 4.11. The Officers shall present the annual report and accounts at the AGM.
- 4.12. A decision to change the Constitution or to wind up the GARNet shall only be taken by a two-thirds majority of Members (rounded to the closest integer) present at a quorate General Meeting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. If necessary, the casting vote by the Chair or other Member chairing the General Meeting shall favour the status quo. A decision to wind up the GARNet that is passed at a General Meeting shall then be put to all Members by an email vote overseen by two Members nominated at the General Meeting (usually to include the Secretary or another nominated Officer). This decision requires the support of a two-thirds majority of all active Members to be passed (rounded to the closest integer; active Members are those current Members who have attended a GARNet meeting or event, or been part of any Study Team, within the 12 months preceding the General Meeting at which the first decision was passed). On winding up, any money or property remaining after payment of debts shall be given to a network with similar purposes to the GARNet, at the discretion of the Officers.

## **5. OFFICER ROLES AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

- 5.1. The GARNet shall have Officers with the following roles: (a) Chair, (b) Vice-Chair, (c) Secretary, (d) Treasurer, (e) Information Technology lead. The Officers must be current Members.
- 5.2. The GARNet shall establish a committee comprising: (a) the Officers, (b) up to two additional Committee Members appointed by a simple majority of Officers who are Members or Associate Members and who shall stand down at the next AGM, (c) two to four Consultant Committee Members appointed by a simple majority of Officers who shall be Honorary Members and who are Consultant Gastroenterologists in the East Midlands region.
- 5.3. A current list of Officers and Committee Members shall be maintained on behalf of the GARNet by the Secretary and any appointments, resignations or terminations shall be properly minuted and the list consequently amended as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 5.4. Committee Members shall be jointly responsible for: promoting the GARNet, supporting the initiation, development and delivery of research projects alongside the GARNet membership, organising and attending Committee Meetings, organising the AGM, arranging educational sessions for the GARNet membership. Other roles are reserved to the Officers.
- 5.5. The specific roles for each Committee Member include those detailed below:
  - a) Chair – act as focal point for the GARNet in coordinating its activities and relationships with other clinical and research individuals or organisations, steers development of the organisation, promotes the organisation and its work nationally, resolves any conflicts,
  - b) Vice-Chair – supports the Chair in his or her role, oversees Project proposals and steers Project development and delivery,
  - c) Secretary – drafts and distributes Agendas, records and distributes Minutes, manages database of Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members, keeps signed Form 1 records, distributes information to the membership and more widely,

- d) Treasurer – coordinates the finances of the GARNet, keeps accounts and receipts for audit if required, administers the bank account,
  - e) Information Technology lead – maintains the website in support of the Aims of the GARNet, develops solutions for information collection and liaises with Site Project Leads,
  - f) Consultant Committee Members – provide strategic guidance for the development of GARNet, provide the benefit of their clinical and research experience, provide continuity and transparency, aid links with the consultant body in the region and more widely, use existing research links to facilitate the initiation and delivery of projects.
- 5.6. GARNet Committee Meetings shall be conducted at least quarterly. At least fourteen days' written or email notice shall be given. All Committee Members should attend unless there are extenuating circumstances, in which case apologies should be sent to the Secretary prior to the Committee Meeting. Video-conferencing technology or similar should be used to facilitate attendance. An Agenda shall be circulated by the Secretary or nominated Committee Member at least seven days prior to the Committee Meeting. At least four Committee Members shall be present in order for the Committee Meeting to be considered quorate. The Committee Meeting shall be chaired by the Chair or nominated Committee Member. Minutes shall be kept of the Committee Meeting by the Secretary or nominated Committee Member. Copies of the Minutes shall be circulated after the Committee Meeting, any necessary amendments discussed, and the Minutes agreed and signed by the Chair or nominated Committee Member at the subsequent Committee Meeting. Finalised Minutes shall be made available to Members. Decisions are made on the consensus view of the Committee Members following discussion. If differing views are not resolved, then a decision is passed by a majority vote of all Committee Members. Voting in absentia is permitted by email to the Secretary or nominated Committee Member. Voting by proxy is not permitted. If necessary, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

## **6. POWERS**

- 6.1. The GARNet shall be founded with the legal structure of an unincorporated association. As such, the GARNet cannot enter into contracts or own property in its own right.
- 6.2. The legal structure of the GARNet shall only be changed by a unanimous vote of all Officers. Any such decision shall be notified to all current Members by the Secretary by email within 7 days. The decision shall stand provided no Member raises an objection within 14 days of the email, or otherwise must first be ratified at a General Meeting by a two-thirds majority of Members (rounded to the closest integer) where voting by proxy shall be permitted.
- 6.3. The Officers on behalf of the GARNet have the power to carry out the purposes of the network, to: (a) raise funds, receive grants and donations, (b) apply funds to carry out the work of the GARNet in line with its Aims, (c) enter into contracts or own property on behalf of the GARNet (monies from the sale of which shall be due to the GARNet), (d) co-operate with and support other trainee-led collaboratives and networks with similar purposes, (e) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the Mission and Aims of the GARNet.
- 6.4. Money shall be held in a bank account for the GARNet. Transactions and cheques shall be authorised by two Officers. The authorised signatories shall be the Officers.
- 6.5. The Treasurer shall keep accounts, issue invoices and issue receipts for monies paid out by the GARNet. These shall be kept for at least three years, or longer where this is required by law. The most recent annual accounts can be seen by anybody on request.
- 6.6. Money shall only be used in line with the Aims. An Officer can only receive money from the GARNet with the agreement of two other Officers, and only in order to enter into contracts

or own property on behalf of the GARNet or to refund reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. All monies paid to support the Aims, or monies paid to Officers to refund expenses etc, are payable out of the funds of the GARNet and are not the responsibility of any individual Member or Officer.

- 6.7. The Officers may seek legal, accountancy or similar professional advice, if and as necessary, as to the legal structure of the GARNet, monies or property held by or for the GARNet. Any reasonable costs or fees incurred thereby, where properly invoiced, shall be paid for by the GARNet and not personally by any of the Officers.

## **7. PROJECTS**

- 7.1. All Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members may put forward and support audit and research Project proposals, irrespective of grade. Project proposal forms shall follow those developed by the SWARM collaborative or as updated from time-to-time by the Officers. There should be an opportunity to present the proposal to the GARNet membership at a suitable meeting.
- 7.2. If deemed necessary by the Officers, for example owing to the number and/or complexity of proposals, projects shall be selected for support by the GARNet using a standardised scoring matrix which allocates a point score in a number of different categories, following the matrix developed by the SWARM collaborative or as updated from time-to-time by the Officers. Each Member has one vote. The Officers, with the advice of the Consultant Committee Members, reserve the right to veto by simple majority a Project that still provokes any concerns after revision, or to recommend some projects over others.
- 7.3. Once an audit or research Project proposal has been selected for support by the GARNet, the proposer shall be designated the Regional Project Lead for that Project unless he or she wishes to delegate this to another Member or Associate Member. The Regional Project Lead shall be advised by suitably experienced Committee Member(s) if needed. The Regional Project Lead may request the assistance of others from the GARNet membership to achieve some of the tasks of their role. These steps should usually be accomplished within 3 months.
- 7.4. Projects may be initiated in collaboration with, or delivered in our region on behalf of, other trainee-led collaboratives in Gastroenterology and other specialties.

## **8. PROJECT ROLES**

- 8.1. Each Project shall have a Study Team associated with it and the specific roles of each member of the Study Team are detailed in the descriptions that follow. The Study Team shall include at least one Officer to ensure linkage and collaboration with the rest of the network.
  - a) Regional Project Lead(s) – this is defined as the individual(s) who is/are in the GARNet membership and is/are responsible for the design and inception of the Project. The role shall usually involve: devising the proposal and protocol, liaising with the Research and Innovation department and other research infrastructure, applying for grants or funding if required, seeking ethics committee approval for the Project where necessary, managing and co-ordinating the conduct of the Project across the region, collating and analysing the study data, presenting the data at regional or national level, submitting and resulting articles for publication.
  - b) Site Project Lead(s) – this is defined as the individual(s) who is/are in the GARNet membership and is/are responsible for the management of the Project at local Trust or site level. The role shall usually involve: liaising with the local Research and Innovation department, liaising with the local Clinical Governance and Audit department, co-

ordinating with the Regional Project Lead(s) to refine research protocols for local delivery and data collection forms, advertising and promoting projects at the local site level, co-ordinating and managing patient consent, recruitment and data collection, presenting the results at local level, developing and delivering a quality improvement plan at local level.

c) Site Consultant – this is defined as the individual who is a GARNet Honorary Member and is responsible for taking institutional responsibility for oversight. The role shall usually involve: supporting the Site Project Lead(s) in their role, advertising and promoting projects at the local site level and particularly with the consultant body and management, contributing to the discussion of results and the quality improvement plan at local level.

d) Site Project Investigator(s) – this is defined as any individual who is in the GARNet membership and is significantly involved in the Project, above and beyond data collection. The role shall usually involve leading a team of Site Project Contributors or making an extensive contribution to patient consent, recruitment and/or data collection.

e) Site Project Contributor(s) – this is defined as any individual who is involved with patient recruitment and/or data collection, whether or not in the GARNet membership.

8.2. Involvement in a GARNet audit at the level of Regional Project Lead or Site Project Lead shall typically be considered sufficient to fulfil the requirement for an annual audit at ARCP in Gastroenterology, as the higher trainee can demonstrate significant involvement in and leadership of the design and delivery of audit, dissemination of results and resulting quality improvement. The final decision rests with the Educational Supervisor, TPD and ARCP Panel.

## **9. AUTHORSHIP AGREEMENT**

9.1. All Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members of the GARNet shall adhere to the authorship agreement that follows. They must have signed Form 1.

9.2. All output from Projects delivered by the GARNet, including but not limited to abstracts, poster presentations, oral presentations and publications, shall be authored as “Gastroenterology Audit and Research Network (GARNet)” or “The GARNet”. This may be prefixed or suffixed with “East Midlands”, “East Midlands Trainees” or “EMiT”. For oral presentations, but not the submitted abstract, the individual(s) delivering the presentation may author as before but prefixed with “[Their Name(s)] on behalf of”.

9.3. Any member of the Study Team may be involved in planning, preparing and delivering outputs, with the advice of Committee Members or other individuals as necessary. It is usually the responsibility of the Regional Project Lead(s) to present and/or publish the output for that Project. If they are unable to or do not wish to, then they shall delegate that task to a Member or Associate Member who made a significant contribution to that Project, usually as a Site Project Lead. The person or people responsible for submission shall usually be named as the corresponding author(s) where this is required by the journal, conference organiser or equivalent. If there are too many or too few candidates for corresponding author from the Study Team than the required number, and this cannot be resolved through discussion, then the Secretary shall usually be listed for correspondence. Any dispute regarding authorship or outputs shall be escalated to the Officers who shall arbitrate and, if necessary, terminate membership under clause 3.9.

- 9.4. Only the individuals both from the membership and who specifically contributed to that Project as a member of the Study Team shall be acknowledged as authors. The list of authors shall be included in any poster presentations and publications, alphabetically by surname.
- 9.5. For publications, the citation shall be available for each individual in bibliographic databases such as PubMed such that any contribution to a Project, however small, is recognised. Any member of the Study Team may reference such a publication on their curriculum vitae.
- 9.6. The Project Roles of individuals from the membership who specifically contributed to that Project shall be acknowledged on the public GARNet website and in the acknowledgements slide of any oral presentations. Where requested by the journal, the contributions of individual members may be included in publications in the format required by that journal.
- 9.7. Any non-member who contributed as a Site Project Contributor shall be acknowledged on the public GARNet website with their written consent, though may instead join the GARNet.
- 9.8. Project data may be presented at local meetings by Members or Associate Members, typically by the Site Project Lead(s) and/or Site Project Investigator(s). Project data for a single site may also be presented in abstract form, as a poster or oral presentation, or as a publication on provision of written consent from the Regional Project Lead(s) and a simple majority of Officers. The GARNet and the Regional Project Lead(s) shall be acknowledged in this case.
- 9.9. For Projects initiated in collaboration with, or delivered in our region on behalf of, other trainee-led collaboratives in Gastroenterology and other specialties, different authorship rules may apply. Exceptionally, a GARNet Project might also require specific authorship rules. Non-standard authorship rules shall only apply to a Project where this is approved unanimously by all Officers and/or by a two-thirds majority of Members (rounded to the closest integer) at an AGM or EGM. If non-standard authorship rules are applied to a specific Project, these shall be communicated to the membership up-front and shall not be changed retrospectively.

## **10. SETTING UP THE NETWORK**

- 10.1. This Constitution was adopted following a unanimous vote at the inaugural AGM on 17 November 2016.

The following Members were present: Dr S Ahmad, Dr T Archer, Dr E Atallah, Dr A Baxter, Dr P Eddowes, Dr P Hooper, Dr E Hossain, Dr R Ingram, Dr M Kasi, Dr K Kodali, Dr G Major, Dr P Oppong, Dr D Poon, Dr Z Rahman, Dr N Rezwan, Dr C Sharratt, Dr H Tan, Dr A Thi, Dr R Tiwari, Dr C Wijayasekara.

The following Officers were elected: Richard Ingram (chair), Giles Major (vice chair), Caroline Sharratt (secretary), Ejaz Hossain (treasurer), Andrew Baxter (IT lead).

**FORM 1**

East Midlands Trainees  
Gastroenterology Audit and Research Network (the GARNet)

GARNet membership and authorship declaration

I, ....., agree to abide by the Constitution of the GARNet (version 1.4, November 2016). I have read the Aims of our network and agree to undertake any work on behalf of or use the resources of the GARNet in accordance with these Aims. I have read and agree to abide by the Authorship Agreement. I understand that my involvement with the GARNet must be with due regard to research governance, data protection and ethical principles and that fraudulent use or omission of data are not acceptable. If I do not wish my name to be included as an author for a specific Project where I am a Study Team member, then I shall inform the Regional Project Lead or an Officer.

Signed .....

Dated .....

If you do not wish your name to be included on the public GARNet website acknowledgement of your Project Role within a Study Team, please initial in the box. Otherwise please leave the box blank. If you later wish to change this answer, then please contact the Secretary who shall provide a new Form 1.