Scottish Dementia Research Consortium

Background & Governance Arrangements

1 Scottish Dementia Research Consortium Background & Context

1.1 The Need for a Scottish Dementia Research Consortium

Scotland holds a prominent position in the dementia field and has a strong reputation for high-quality dementia research in the scientific, clinical, psychological and social fields. However, it is recognised that our collective strengths and potential collective voice as a powerful interdisciplinary research community have not yet been fully optimised.

Few current dementia research initiatives and opportunities exist which bring together all these strengths; the ability for Scotland to influence national, UK, European and international research policy as one co-ordinated research community is weakened as a result. The potential opportunity for pooling our collective skills and resources in order to bid for further research funding is under-realised, which can also lead to duplication and a lack of a co-ordinated approach when opportunities of this nature arise.

In summer 2012 a small group of researchers from across the disciplines, supported by Alzheimer Scotland, met in order to discuss these issues. The group also addressed the UK Government's Dementia Research Challenge, which at that time the group believed Scotland's researchers were not able to access on an equal footing with other UK researchers because of the primary focus being placed on a connection with the Department of Health. The group was firmly of the view that this was a missed opportunity and that Scotland had a lot to offer.

The group engaged in a dialogue with the UK Government to improve this relationship whilst at the same time determining the need for a co-ordinated approach to dementia research. This led to the development of the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC).

2 Scottish Dementia Research Consortium Definition

2.1 Purpose & Objectives of the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium

The purpose of the SDRC is to support the development and expansion of high-quality, collaborative and effectively co-ordinated dementia research throughout Scotland.

Its objectives are to:

- Bring together Scottish-based dementia researchers from all disciplines
- Promote collaboration and co-ordination between researchers and enable a pooling of talent and skill
- Nurture a greater level of joint research applications and increase the level of national and international research funding secured by partners within the SDRC
- Represent Scotland's dementia research interests at a national, UK, European and international level

- Ensure that the voice and views of people with dementia and their families are central to research policy and development
- Ensure there is an effective communication strategy with the general public about the level, scope and scale of dementia research taking place throughout Scotland
- Work with the Scottish Government in a supportive and complementary way to help ensure their policies and strategic approach to improving dementia services are achieved

2.2 Proposed Scottish Dementia Research Consortium Scope

The SDRC will be a membership-based organisation open to individuals who are engaged in or planning to engage in research.

There will also be a form of lay membership open to people with dementia, their carers and relatives who are interested in research or are registered with the Scottish Dementia Clinical Research Network.

3 Scottish Dementia Research Consortium Organisation & Governance

3.1 Overview of Scottish Dementia Research Consortium Organisation & Governance Structure

3.1.1 Membership

The SDRC will have an established membership register that individuals will join and in doing so will agree to adhere to the governance arrangements outlined in this document. Each member will be required to complete an application form and this will include an outline description of their current research and/or research interests.

Members will be offered the opportunity to attend a free bi-annual SDRC open meeting. This will provide the opportunity to nurture and develop partnership collaborations, share new research ideas, influence the priorities of the SDRC and engage in the development of potential new SDRC research initiatives.

Members will also be able to access details of other members' research activity, building potential new partnerships, avoiding duplication and nurturing new research ideas and activity. This activity and member support will be provided by the SDRC Co-ordinator.

Individual members will be entitled to put themselves forward for election onto an Executive Committee and members of the Executive Committee will be elected through a membership vote and election process.

3.1.2 Lay Members

There will also be the opportunity for people with dementia and their carers who have an interest to join as Lay Members. These members will be represented by the co-opted Executive Committee members and will have no voting rights to elect other Executive Committee members.

3.1.3 Executive Committee

There will be an Executive Committee established and elected by the members which will meet four times per year. The Executive Committee will be responsible for the strategic direction of the SDRC and for managing the budget allocated by Alzheimer Scotland and any other funding that might be made available to the SDRC. Overall financial governance and control will be held within Alzheimer Scotland's constitutional arrangements and charitable legal structures. The SDRC Co-ordinator will assist the Executive Committee in this activity and in ensuring the effective management of all resources. The SDRC Co-ordinator will be an employee of Alzheimer Scotland.

The Executive Committee will represent the interest of the members and agree a set of dementia research priorities that Executive Committee members will use when representing the SDRC. These priorities will form the basis of a consistent and clear research policy view that will be communicated to all members and external stakeholders. Members of the Executive Committee will represent the SDRC in relevant national and international forums and ensure that the collaborative interests of the SDRC are not superseded by any personal or individual interest.

The Executive Committee will have nine elected members voted on by all non-lay members and three co-opted positions. There will be two members elected to represent each main field of dementia research; Science and Technology; Clinical, Health & Applied Practice, Psychology & Humanities and Social & Population. Members wishing to put themselves forward for Executive Committee membership must identify one the main fields that they wish to represent and agree to the commitments outlined below in the role of Executive Committee Member.

The ninth Executive Committee member will be the Chair of the SDRC, elected by the membership. Two Vice Chairs will be elected by and from the eight Executive Committee members.

The three co-opted positions will be allocated to an Alzheimer Scotland official acting as Secretary to the SDRC, a member of the Scottish Dementia Working Group and a member of the National Dementia Carers Action Network.

A member will serve on the Executive Committee for three years before requiring to be re-elected by ballot of the membership. To ensure continuity, three members will be selected by a random method to stand down at the end of years one and two after the SDRC is established.

The Chair will serve for three years before requiring to be re-elected by ballot of the membership.

Elected Executive Members and Chair will serve for a maximum of two three-year terms and then be required to resign and not be eligible for re-election until a further three years has passed.

An Executive Committee Member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings will automatically be deemed to have stood down from the Executive Committee.

3.2 Roles & Responsibilities

Chair:

i Chairing four Executive Committee meetings per year and two membership events which will be on the same day as two of the Executive Committee meetings
ii Ensuring that the SDRC sets realistic strategic priorities and communicating these to the membership and external stakeholders
iii Ensuring that at all times a collaborative approach to the work the SDRC incorporating the views of all disciplines and stakeholders is taken
iv Ensuring that no one institution, group, field or body benefits more or less than any other as a result of membership of SDRC
v Liaising with the CE of Alzheimer Scotland and ensuring that Alzheimer Scotland Council and relevant committees are informed of the work of the SDRC
vi Representing the SDRC at national policy forums and on international platforms.

Vice Chair:

i As above in the absence of or by agreement with the Chair.

Executive Committee Member:

i Ensuring effective communication with respective research field the member is elected to represent
ii Attending a minimum of two meetings per year
iii Responsible for representing the SDRC at national policy forums and on international platforms
iv Supporting the development of collaborative initiatives and pooling exercises
v Leading and nurturing new research initiatives and projects
vi Exploring new potential funding routes and potential partnerships on behalf of the SDRC.

Secretary:

i Arranging meetings, ballots and voting procedures and managing membership issues
ii Ensuring the Executive Committee operate within the given agreed governance arrangements and general rules
iii Supporting the SDRC Co-ordinator in the administration of the budget and supporting effective use of resources
iv Liaison with Alzheimer Scotland Council and senior staff.

SDWG Representative:

i Responsible for representing the views of people with dementia and keeping the SDWG informed of progress and general research issues.

NDCAN Representative:

ii Responsible for representing the views of carers and keeping NDCAN informed of progress and general research issues.

4 Resourcing the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium

4.1 Costs & Funding

Alzheimer Scotland will fund set up, basic running costs and the appointment of a part-time SDRC Co-ordinator. Alzheimer Scotland will allocate a budget for representation costs and a budget for planned events that will be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to work within.

Alzheimer Scotland will be responsible for sourcing other forms of funding and any donations of any kind made to the SDRC will be made to Alzheimer Scotland who will ensure that these funds are directed to the SDRC.

Alzheimer Scotland has committed to resourcing the SDRC.